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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GENDER ASSESSMENT USAID/Central Asian Republics

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan

March 2010

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GENDER ASSESSMENT

USAID/Central Asian Republics



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DISCLAIMER: The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| ADS | Automated Directives System |
| AIDS | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome |
| AO | Assistance Objective |
| APS | Annual Program Statements |
| AUCA | American University of Central Asia |
| BEI | Business Environment Improvement Project |
| CAR | Central Asian Republics |
| CEC | Central Election Committee |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| COP | Chief of Party |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of a Child |
| CWFA | Committee on Women and Family Affairs (Tajikistan) |
| DLI | Development Leadership Initiative |
| DM | Democracy and Conflict Mitigation |
| DV | Domestic violence |
| E&E | Europe and Eurasia region |
| EFT | Electronic funds transfer |
| EG | Economic Growth |
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| FSU | Former Soviet Union |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GO | Governmental Organization |
| GoKG | Government of Kyrgyzstan |
| GoKZ | Government of Kazakhstan |
| GONGO | Government organized NGO |
| GoTJ | Government of Tajikistan |
| GoTK | Government of Turkmenistan |
| GoU | Government of Uzbekistan |
| GTG | Gender Theme Group |
| GWG | UN Gender Working Group |
| HE | Health and Education |
| HIP | Health Improvement Project |
| HIV | Human immunodeficiency virus |
| HOP | Health Outreach Program |
| IATP | Internet Access and Training Program |
| IDU | Injecting drug user |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| INL | International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs |
| IO | International organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IQC | Indefinite Quantity Contract |
| IR | Intermediate Results |
| KG | Kyrgyzstan |
| KSBD | Kazakhstan Small Business Development Project |
| KZ | Kazakhstan |

| | |
|--------|---|
| LWA | Leader with Associate |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| M/OAA | Management Bureau/ Office of Acquisition and Assistance |
| MARPs | Most-at-risk populations |
| MCH | Maternal and child health |
| MIA | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| MSM | Men Who Have Sex With Men |
| MTI | Medical Teams International |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PHC | Primary Health Care |
| PMP | Performance Monitoring Plan |
| PSC | Personal Services Contractor |
| RFA | Request for Assistance |
| RFP | Request for Proposal |
| RFTOP | Request for Task Order Proposal |
| RTLCL | Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project |
| SISF | Social Initiatives Support Fund (Uzbekistan) |
| SME | Small and medium-sized enterprise |
| STIs | Sexually transmitted infections |
| TB | Tuberculosis |
| TIP | Trafficking in Persons |
| TJ | Tajikistan |
| TK | Turkmenistan |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| UZ | Uzbekistan |
| VSL | Village Savings and Loans Program |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WID | Women in Development |

Executive Summary

The five-country USAID/CAR Gender Assessment was conducted from October 10 to November 22, 2009. It was jointly funded by the Women in Development Indefinite Quantity Contract (WID IQC) Task Order for Short-Term Technical Assistance and Training (STTA&T), implemented by DevTech Systems, Inc., and the USAID/Central Asian Republics (CAR) regional mission based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with country offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The assessment is based on a desk review and fieldwork in the region. The gender assessment team included two consultants (Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin) who were accompanied for two weeks by one USAID/Washington staff member, and assisted by a local gender expert or USAID gender point person in each of the five countries.

Background on the Central Asia Region. The legacy of decades of Soviet rule still affects the development of the five countries that comprise the Central Asian Republics (CAR) – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Unlike some other countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), the Central Asian countries did not achieve independence through a broad-based movement with democratic leaders. The transition period since independence in 1991 has been marked by social and economic difficulties as well as political stagnation with dynastic leadership structures in most countries, where the former Communist leader of each former Republic became its first president.

Natural resources, particularly oil and gas, have provided a financial safety net for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and fueled Kazakhstan's breakout economic development in the region. On the other hand, the resource poor countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are struggling with poverty and political instability compounded by a "brain drain" to their richer neighbors. Furthermore, tensions flare in the rich and fertile Fergana Valley that straddles Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which has a religiously conservative population. In addition to long-standing economic and political problems, outmigration, regional conflicts, religious differences, increasing gender inequalities, and the struggle to define a national identity have emerged as some new developmental challenges in the area. And, the lingering effects of a planned economy still impact all sectors of society.

Gender Trends and Conditions. After independence, women and men have faced some different pressures with the economic collapse and restructuring of the economic, political, and social sectors. Initial research throughout the whole former Soviet Union indicated that women suffered additional challenges as the social safety net was rapidly crumbling or being actively dismantled in many countries. Without childcare support and protections for working mothers, some women returned home and others stopped having children (resulting in negative population growth). The downsizing of the public sector and the preference for hiring men (who did not have childcare or other time-consuming family responsibilities) in the newly developing private sector led to greater unemployment among previously working women. Women seeking alternative livelihoods struggled to finance entrepreneurship activities due to a lack of ownership in land, the family car, or other assets suitable as collateral for SME loans. Instead, women became the majority of shuttle traders, a business that required only small amounts of startup capital.

Men struggled when many factories closed, while women were more willing to take the newer lower-paying service sector jobs. The loss of status caused by unemployment and sinking earning potential drove some men into depression and into increasing unhealthy lifestyle activities, such as drinking, drug use, and risky and violent behavior. Many men across the region have sought employment outside their home countries and that process of outmigration has its own risks and difficulties, discussed later in this

report. Economic hardship among men have also created problems in getting married, especially where the tradition of paying a bride price is still practiced, and has been cited as a contributing factor in the increase in bride kidnapping, early marriage, and informal marriages.

Moreover, there are competing socio-political models of “womanhood” – the Soviet past, the new influence of Islam, the redefining of a historically-based national identity – all of which contain patriarchal elements. Thus, many Central Asian women have expressed the concern that they are struggling to reclaim what progress they previously achieved against a tide of new challenges to gender equality. It should be noted that gender concepts are perceived differently in Central Asia (and the rest of the FSU) than in the West, based on different historical perspectives. Thus, it is critical to approach gender issues within the local context, considering background references as well as current trends. These issues are discussed in greater detail in the section “Conceptual Issues on Gender” for each country.

Regional Recommendations. Below are general recommendations for regional programs that operate in several or all CAR countries. The relative importance of these recommendations varies from country to country. See the country-specific report for additional relevant detail.

Economic Growth

- Continue to support **microfinance and small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) lending**, focusing in under-resourced areas where women need income generation activities, and/or where unemployed men are at risk for labor trafficking. Encourage successful women borrowers to “graduate” from high-interest micro-loans and expand their businesses through SME loans.
- Ensure that **agricultural technical assistance programs** provide technical assistance responsive to local conditions, not by limiting areas of women’s activity according to their roles in gardening, food preparation and processing, but by providing support for their involvement in farm management and expanded crop and livestock production.
- Include gender considerations as an integral part of **economic policy reform** activities, using gender budgeting and other types of gender analysis to identify likely gender impacts. Utilize local gender expertise as needed to conduct targeted research on topics such as pension reform, land reform, budget reform, etc.

Health and Education

- Maximize gender-sensitive approaches in the **health improvement program** to promote best practices for maternal and child health (encouraging male involvement), reproductive health (focusing not only on women and men regarding family planning, but also men’s needs regarding sexually transmitted infections [STIs], infertility, urology), tuberculosis (TB) and HIV prevention and treatment (considering women’s risk and stigma issues as well as men’s).
- Ensure that targeting of most-at-risk populations (MARPs) in the **health outreach program** works in each category (e.g., sex-workers, ex-prisoners, migrants) with both sexes (where possible), and respond appropriately to their differing challenges and needs.
- [Cross-cutting] Partner with local gender experts and gender-focused organizations in developing and promoting **gender education** programs (for children, teens, and adults of both sexes) to overcome gender stereotypes and support grassroots efforts to define gender in the local context.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Promote **street law and basic legal education** programs that respond to the lack of information among the general population, the need to provide information on rapidly changing laws, and the

importance of providing information on secular law to those who are studying exclusively at religious institutions. Legal topics covered should be sure to include gender issues such as land rights and inheritance, protection from violence against women (including domestic violence), equal rights and opportunities, women's rights as human rights, role of ombudsman, etc.

- Integrate women's rights issues such as sex discrimination and violence against women into **training programs for lawyers and judges** (e.g., use as examples in ethics training or mock trial activities).
- Support **non-governmental organization (NGO) activities** that are demand-driven by community needs and not donor-driven. Look for opportunities to encourage men to participate in civil society activities (especially in health, education, and social sector areas dominated by women).
- Promote **women's political participation** at all levels—national, regional, and local—and provide support to help those women who succeed in getting elected be effective legislators.

Cross-cutting (all sectors)

- Work with other Embassy programs (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section, Democracy Commission) to promote a coordinated community response to **domestic violence and trafficking in persons** – by (i) supporting hotlines, crisis centers, and shelters; (ii) providing training for police, prosecutors, judges, and media; (iii) promoting referral mechanisms to include health care, psychological counseling, legal support, shelter, economic opportunities, etc. to fill the gap until the national governments pick up support. Consider the practicality and advisability of mixing services, and encourage public-private partnerships where local government authorities provide in-kind support such as rent-free space and utilities.

Operational Recommendations. Over the past three to four years, there has been little to no coordinated, substantive attention to gender at the USAID/CAR mission. Efforts to organize a gender working group and to institutionalize a systematic approach to gender issues throughout the procurement process and project cycle were sidelined by budget and staff cuts and lack of expertise among mission staff. The development of a new country and regional strategy offers an opportunity to rethink the mission's approach to integrating gender into its programming and procedures. Below are specific operational recommendations for the USAID/CAR regional mission:

- Approve a **Mission Order on Gender Integration**.
- Integrate gender in the **New Strategy 2010-2012** by including a statement identifying the critical gender disparities in each of the countries that will be addressed through USAID programming; including a set of gender-based constraints in each sector, at both the Assistance Objective (AO) and Intermediate Results (IR) level, including the AO narratives; expressing a goal of increasing the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, not only on training participation, but also to provide a baseline of gender gaps for each sector and to allow for measurement of progress towards closing those gaps; and providing targeted programming (e.g., men-specific or women-specific), as appropriate.
- Develop a gender-sensitive **Results Framework/Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)**.
- Include gender analysis in all **Activity Approval Documents** and the statement of work or program description for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.
- Ensure that gender issues are included in the **procurement process** by identifying key gender disparities and requiring partners to implement programs that address these gender disparities in all procurement documents.

- Include a gender component in **evaluation criteria in Requests for Proposal, Requests for Task Order Proposal, Requests for Assistance, Leaders with Associate, and Annual Program Statements (RFPs/RFTOPs/RFAs/LWA/APS)** including the project plan, staff qualifications, and institutional capacity.
- Monitor **workplans and reporting** for gender integration compliance.
- Include gender components in **assessments/surveys** and ensure gender diversity both in the team composition and among informants/interviewees.
- Provide **gender training to Mission Staff and Implementing Partners.**
- Increase gender sensitivity of **Implementing Partners and Sub-Grantees**, encouraging them to maintain equitable staffing and operational procedures (including prohibitions on sex discrimination and sexual harassment).
- (Re-)Establish a **Mission Gender Working Group.**
- Identify and utilize **external gender technical assistance.**
- Participate in/Establish **Donor Coordination on Gender.**

A. Kazakhstan Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Analyze the sex-disaggregated data reported to USAID on **training and participation** to identify area where either men or women are underrepresented and need support.
- Identify areas of **policy reform** that would improve gender equity in the business environment and on gender issues and trade to provide direction for future studies.
- Use multiple **channels of communication** (e.g., radio, flyers, women’s group meetings) to reach both men and women about programs and requirements and encourage partners to use a similarly broad reach in hiring both men and women into project positions.
- Support both single-sex and mixed-sex functions to facilitate **business networking.**
- Consider recruiting a business in the incubator programs to provide **day care or after-school care** so that other women entrepreneurs could more easily participate in the project.
- Consider how the project might promote linkages to other local **microcredit** programs to enhance women’s abilities to start and maintain their enterprises.
- Consider initiating **alternative payment plans** for rent and other services to help both women and men address cash-flow problems that informants mentioned as one of the reasons new businesses dropped out of the program.
- Add **gender-related indicators** (such as those being developed by the USAID-funded Booz-Allen BIZCLIR project) to the “Doing Business” indicators.
- Address gender issues in the **customs officials training curriculum.**
- Review potential gender barriers that might arise with the **electronic single window process.**

Health

- Develop **indicators** in health improvement programs (HIPs) and health outreach programs (HOPs) to measure relative changes between men and women as well as the count of absolute numbers currently proposed.
- Develop **gender-sensitive behavior change programs** to address men’s health disparities.
- Conduct study on Kazakh **ideas of masculinity** as related to men’s patterns of disease and health-seeking behavior.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Develop program opportunities to work both with mixed-sex and single-sex groups and include specific components to improve attitudes towards **women’s leadership and political engagement**.
- Identify program opportunities to bring men into **NGO activities**.
- Provide support to professionals who provide legal, financial, and medical services to those seeking them.

NGO assistance

- Offer **gender training to media** to broaden understanding of gender beyond women and family issues.
- Conduct study to determine if there is a generational and/or regional break in **attitudes and practices of gender equality**, either through existing mechanism or new grant or contract option.

Gender-based violence activities

- Increase support to NGOs working on crisis hotlines, rape counseling, shelters, and women in prisons.
- Develop activities to improve the monitoring of domestic violence and other gender-based violence incidents.
- Support advocacy efforts on the passage of equal rights and opportunities law.
- Support gender education in schools and through public service messages to change attitudes towards gender-based violence.

New or emerging areas of interest

- Develop components on gender equality education that could be incorporated into other sector-specific activities.
- Pay attention to the health consequences of environmental pollution.
- Investigate the country-specific gender dimensions of climate change.

B. Kyrgyzstan Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Target **entrepreneurship and income generation projects** to areas most heavily impacted by unemployment and migration.
- Work with Government of Kyrgyzstan (GoKG) to find ways to better respond to **internal migration**, especially easing *propiska* (residency permit) restrictions that create barriers for mobile job seekers and provide support to ensure that accompanying families have access to the social protections for which they are eligible (education, healthcare, labor protection, etc.).
- Explore options for creating more **open markets for local produce**, e.g., from backyard farms where pricing would be market based and not mafia controlled.
- Continue to promote **microfinance** in underserved regions and encourage successful women entrepreneurs to “graduate” to SME lending to grow their businesses.
- Continue developing **water user associations** using gender equitable approaches that involve both women and men and respond to community needs. Consider how to expand association activity beyond agricultural usage to include household water issues.

- Work with SME advocacy groups to seek a more equitable **tax payment scheme for SMEs**. Conduct a gender analysis of business environment to confirm gender differences in the impact of the current patent/license scheme.
- Collect sex-disaggregated information for survey takers and those who provided service to them as part of **trade/customs customer satisfaction surveys**.
- Develop an appropriate test mechanism (e.g., a four-season sampling of a selected number of shuttle traders at different border crossings) to see whether the **bulk weight customs fee** system is actually less costly to shuttle traders than *ad valorem* fees. Encourage adjustment of the bulk weight fees if necessary.
- If possible, support the provision of **gender budgeting** training and technical assistance to parliamentarians and other government officials responsible for budgeting. Ensure that whatever technical assistance is provided by USAID-funded activities on budgeting includes gender budgeting.
- Provide gender and economics policy analysis on **pension reform** to interested policymakers – and be sure to include gender expertise in any other economic policy assistance as well.

Health and Education

- Support awareness raising campaign about **rights to health and education services** for all Kyrgyz citizens – and whatever rights are also available to non-citizen residents. Include administrative barriers as an area covered by legal rights activities.
- Continue to support incentives for **primary health care (PHC) doctors and specialists in rural areas**. Work with the Ministry of Health, health promotion NGOs, and ethnic community groups to raise awareness among mixed marriage populations (especially Uzbek women and men) about the need to register for Kyrgyzstan health services.
- Support efforts to continue **healthy lifestyle education** (including healthy relationships and sex education) in the schools for both boys and girls. Assist with linking pre-marriage counseling programs to accurate medical evidence-based information.
- Continue work on reducing **maternal and infant mortality**, and include men as partners in these efforts. Seek ways to address the reproductive health needs of both women and men, including STI prevention and treatment, and overcoming the deficit in urologists and andrologists at health clinics.
- Investigate further the issue of local “public women” who may require special outreach efforts as a **MARP**. Develop targeted outreach based on the particular vulnerabilities of men and women returning migrants, ex-prisoners, and sex-workers.
- Work with Ministry of Education to seek solutions to current and impending **teacher shortage**, including encouraging the recruitment of both male and female teachers.
- Conduct research on reasons for an increase in male **school dropouts** at the secondary level.
- Continue to offer **street law and basic legal education** materials and training to interested communities, including religious schools. Ensure that curriculum includes Kyrgyzstan laws on gender equality and women’s rights as human rights.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Support **crisis centers** and development of additional **shelter services**.
- Support the establishment of a **national crisis hotline** with trained and experienced staff who are able to provide counseling and referrals for additional services.
- Include a domestic violence module in any **community police, prosecutor, and judicial training** with a goal of increasing gender sensitivity and promoting a coordinated community response to domestic violence (referral network involving police, prosecution, and health, mental health, legal, and other support services).

- Work with human rights groups (including women’s rights groups) and law enforcement (through INL) to promote better understanding among both men and women of the distinction between consensual elopement and **bride kidnapping**, and enforcement of laws against bride kidnapping.
- Consider supporting programming to pilot successful community-based models to prevent **bride kidnapping** in areas with high rates of the crime.
- Support legal rights advocacy groups as they work with policymakers and religious leaders to reduce the incidence of **unregistered marriages**.
- Support advocacy and training programs to increase **women’s political participation** at the local level. Seek opportunities to bring together more secular women’s rights groups with religious women’s groups over common issues and concerns.
- Continue support for **legal aid/clinics for the indigent** and other vulnerable populations, such as women in inheritance and family law disputes, and victims of violence.
- Continue efforts to support gender programming through **media activities** and look for opportunities to promote community radio programming that would include gender topics as part of its themes.
- Direct **NGO support activities** to those successful NGOs that are interested in developing the next generation of leaders (men and women) and adjust their organization to a more mission-driven agenda (rather than the strong leader-driven agenda).

C. Tajikistan Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Support **women entrepreneurs** in expanding from small enterprises into medium and large businesses by supporting business management programs, opening more avenues for accessing credit, and addressing discriminatory legislation.
- [Economic Growth (EG), Health & Education (HE), and Democracy (DM)] Promote **women’s networking and mobility** and ability to obtain training and education outside the home by modeling the “good practices” of the Mercy Corps Development Assistance Program (DAP) study on women’s empowerment and the work of Winrock’s Water User Association Support Project throughout the Tajikistan portfolio.
- Develop activities within rural development activity or land tenure program to inform **women on dekhani (farms)** of their rights; to encourage greater involvement of women in *dekhani* farm management; to help women or women’s groups to gain their own land; to provide technical training on specific agricultural techniques; to bring women into the building of new agricultural value chains not only in positions as agricultural workers in the fields and factories but throughout the chain.
- Ensure that legal aid from the land tenure project is accessible to women.
- Develop and support a new program to encourage more women to enter into studies of **agricultural science and agribusiness**. In Tajikistan, it should start targeting young women finishing high school and in college, as well.
- Link economic growth and education programs in supporting **women’s entry into professional and scientific education programs**.
- Support women’s entry into **agricultural sciences and related businesses** as part of existing programming in agriculture and rural development.
- Support gender training programs for **business associations** to encourage flexible work hours (reducing conflict with domestic responsibilities) and to change attitudes about women workers and entrepreneurs.
- Study the situation of **microcredit** to understand shift in client profiles from women to men.
- Support women in **new business arenas** (small industry, small infrastructure, and energy promotion with growth potential in addition to expanding kitchen gardens and home economics).

Health and Education

- Continue to support investments in **basic health and sanitation infrastructure** such as the project to provide access to clean water. It will be critical for the Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project to establish a baseline of time allocation and to track time use at the midterm and end of the project to demonstrate how time saved in water collection was used.
- Support programs to encourage improved access for men and women to **health services**, developing gender-differentiated models.
- Encourage additional **research into other gender-differentiated health issues**, e.g., studies that investigate the social effects of stigma such as disease on marriageability and employment and how that may differ for men or women.
- Improve the continuity of **healthcare (particularly for TB) among migrant male populations**.
- Initiate specific programming to work with parents and religious leaders to encourage **school attendance**.
- [EG and HE] Provide support to **young women in secondary and higher education** to keep them in school.
- Expand the participation of women in **vocational education activities**.
- [DM and HE] Make better links to local NGOs working on **gender and education issues**, including gender-based violence.
- Work on programs to **keep teachers in school** and to encourage the training and retention of women teachers.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Support **international exchange programs** for women leaders and also work with men currently in government to expand their understanding of gender equality.
- Support national exposure for women involved in **local government**.
- Continue programs on **capacity building for local *jamoats* and *oblast* (administrative divisions) authorities**.
- Increase ability of **Trafficking in Persons (TIP) activities** to counter the labor trafficking of men.
- Integrate gender issues into curricular materials for any future **Parliamentarian training programs**.
- Support the use of woman-owned businesses and a combination of men and women in the crews of **community development and local government infrastructure projects**.
- Develop guidelines for projects working with the **media** to include attention to issues facing men in their work addressing gender stereotypes.

Gender-based Violence Recommendations

- Expand support to **women's and children's crisis centers**.
- Increase support and coordinate with the US Embassy programs to **NGOs working on crisis hotlines, domestic violence, rape counseling, shelters, and women in prisons**.
- Provide **financial support to NGOs** so that they can better cover salaries for professionals (doctors, psychologists, and lawyers) and do not have to depend on volunteers.
- Develop ways to link programming on **gender-based violence prevention and services to the programs of American Corners**.
- Support advocacy on passage of **domestic violence law**.
- Support **gender education** to change attitudes towards gender-based violence among both men and women.

- Develop activities (within current programs where possible) to **work with men** on prevention of domestic violence.

Gender consequences of Labor Migration Recommendations

- Support efforts by International Organization of Migration (IOM) and others to understand the scope of the problem of the “**abandoned wives of labor migrants**” and require baseline surveys in new projects to identify the scope of abandoned families in the rural areas in which they are working.
- Support programs to assist **labor migrants**, both men and women, with information about their rights and access to medical care and psycho-social counseling to address the difficulties these families experience through separation and reuniting.
- Develop programs specifically for **wives of migrants** that can help them find employment or develop their own income-generating activities. These efforts should also include community programs to change attitudes of in-laws and local community members about the benefits of women’s employment outside the home.
- Look into an assessment of **internal migration levels** as well, including the informal sector.

Recommendations for the Tajikistan Country Office

- Use an **integrated approach** to addressing gender issues.
- Establish **baseline gender data**.
- **Internal gender focus:** Use the opportunity provided by the new strategy development and the turnover in the office to recruit someone with substantive skills in gender analysis and to give that person the formal authority to work with team members to broaden their understanding of gender issues and to integrate more effective strategies to address gender disparities into their programs.
- **External gender focus:** Learn from other donors and members of the NGO community who have been actively supporting gender-related work since the early 1990s by sending a formal representative to the UNIFEM-led Gender Theme Group (GTG); inviting groups working on gender issues to present on their work to USAID and US Embassy staff; and developing a roster of groups and individual consultants by sector to provide guidance to USAID partners.

D. Turkmenistan Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Look for opportunities to partner with government organizations such as the Women’s Union or the Union of Industrialists if assistance is needed in expanding **women’s business opportunities** and identifying promising market niches.
- Continue and expand support for resource centers, especially with fast internet connections and “librarians” who can guide clients in how to find relevant **employment and business information**. Training should equally promote both women and men’s access to information, with the timing of classes being gender-sensitive and women-only classes considered in more conservative communities (based on the preferences of the women themselves).
- Work collaboratively with existing government and NGO **business education programs** for both women and men, where women are increasingly the new business entrants. The Women’s Union/UNDP may be good partners to consider through their more than 30 Women’s Resource Centers, as well as Hemayat. Subsidies to provide classes at no-cost should continue for the poor, single-parent families, and the disabled.
- Actively include potential and existing women entrepreneurs in **agribusiness activities**, including greenhouses.

- Expand areas of **women's self-employment** activities to include a wide range of production and service activities not limited only to traditional crafts, sewing and backyard farms. Unemployed men should also be included in programs to encourage income generating self-employment activities. Train clients to conduct their own market research to determine what are the best opportunities for business success in their region.
- Develop/expand **microfinance and SME financing** options, ensuring that requirements are gender sensitive so that women are not disadvantaged by lending requirements (e.g., collateral requirements that are limited to assets not typically owned by women could be modified to include other assets women are more likely to own) and can have true equal access to loans.

Health and Education

- Continue work on **reproductive health** for both women, including breast health if possible, and men.
- Look for opportunities to provide effective health outreach to a wide variety of **MARPs** on connection between untreated STIs and infertility, as well as other types of STIs and HIV. If possible, work with women and men in all at-risk categories, including ex-prisoners.
- Work with Youth Union and community channels to develop **health promotion** materials and activities to encourage men to utilize available health resources such as men's health clinics.
- Coordinate with the UNICEF work on **healthy lifestyles school curriculum** and look for opportunities to coordinate with USAID-supported adult health promotion activities.
- Look for opportunities to integrate **domestic violence awareness**, screening, etc. into health activities.
- Integrated outreach to community leaders such as elders and religious leaders of different faiths. While these leaders are more often men, the **health information** should include both that for men and for women and children's health.
- Assess the need for **textbooks in Turkmen language** by identifying the population(s) most disadvantaged and the topics most useful and/or in demand.
- Increase **web content in Turkmen language** and encourage both women and men to develop content that will be relevant to their own communities/interest groups.
- Provide **training and internet access** to disadvantaged populations, including women.
- Continue **internet training and computer literacy classes** at IREX/PICTT (previously known as Internet Access and Training Program [IATP]) centers and with partners such as Hemayat, the Youth Union, education centers at universities/institutes, and language resource centers.
- Continue support for **resource centers**.
- Promote connection between **education and employment** within the Junior Achievement program, especially in entrepreneurship and business management, being careful to avoid gender stereotyping. Consider other opportunities to provide linkages to other US-based models and programs for internships, mentoring, job shadowing, etc. to help link students with employment opportunities.
- Ensure that the design and implementation of **youth activities** is based on gender equality principles and not inadvertently reinforcing gender stereotypes. Monitor participation by sex to ensure that activities are responding to the interests of both young men and young women.
- Consider providing support to Women's Union's efforts to develop a **gender education** curriculum/program.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Target new areas for **community development** activities. Continue gender sensitive approaches that encourage and support the equal participation and leadership of women, including young women, as well as men.

- Continue retraining and providing updated **legal materials** for lawyers on the changing laws of Turkmenistan. Create a website where such updated legal materials would be readily available.
- Develop and distribute printed materials (e.g., pamphlets) in clear language on various **legal topics** (e.g., inheritance, divorce, landlord-tenant disputes, etc.) to update the general population on the current Turkmenistan laws. Make materials available on the internet or through email requests as well.
- Continue roving **rural legal services** program but only in conjunction with outreach and other activities. Ensure that the lawyers are gender sensitive and prepared to assist both men and women in their legal needs.
- Continue support **for training of social advocates**, especially targeting new areas that have interested NGO or government-organized NGO (GONGO) partners (e.g., Women’s Union) and do not yet have that capacity/experience.
- Consider funding **youth initiatives** through the Red Crescent Society and other NGOs and GONGOs. Ensure that funding supports initiatives that are developed and led by young women and young men, and that address any specific needs identified by either group.
- Follow-up on work with Women’s Union to continue gender **sensitivity training for media workers**.

E. Uzbekistan Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Continue and expand **agribusiness programs** to reach more women and families, especially low-income rural families, with technical assistance and access to microfinance (VSL, if possible). These activities should also look for opportunities to assist in coordinated processing, marketing, and sales of products, which can increase income generated and improve community engagement among participants.
- Consider targeting some **agribusiness training and technical assistance** activities toward low-skilled unemployed men at risk of being trafficked or migrating for work.
- Work with local business groups and experts to resolve problems **with legal framework for SME funding** (e.g., establishing SME lending funds). Replicate successful SME lending programs from other Europe and Eurasia (E&E) countries – ensuring that risk assessment and collateral requirements are gender-sensitive and do not adversely impact female borrowers.
- Successful **microfinance** clients with good credit histories, especially women, should be encouraged and assisted in graduating to SME financing with better terms (e.g., lower interest rates, longer repayment periods, etc.).
- Continue support for **business education** for women, and consider adding some target activities for unemployed men who are interested in starting their own business and/or a family business with their wives.
- **Water users associations** should develop approach toward farm consolidation plan to ensure continued representation of farmers who continue to use the land even after ownership has been transferred. Consider representation of home water users with a focus on increasing women’s representation.
- Ensure that **banking reform activities** and development of **consumer products** such as electronic funds transfer (EFT) cards are made more widely available outside the capital (including in rural areas) and are accompanied by educational/promotional programs that target both women and men.

Health and Education

- [HE or DM] Conduct a targeted preliminary **assessment on migration patterns** and related health issues, particularly focusing on the differences among men and women of different age groups, skill levels, geographic origins (urban/rural), and types of employment sought/achieved. The assessment should also identify typical health risks and the best methods to conduct outreach among different groups of returning migrants.
- **Reproductive health**, as well as maternal and child health, programs need to continue and expand male involvement in family planning. A specific focus also is needed to include male infertility issues (see HIV/STIs below).
- Continue **STIs/HIV education**, prevention, and treatment – especially for youth – but also for adult men and women. Programs to reach youth also should broaden their reach to parents and schools within the context of healthy families.
- Provide support to **disability NGOs**, especially their efforts to overcome stereotypes about disability and related gender issues that result in different types of discrimination.
- Provide support to activities to reduce **child abandonment** and increase opportunities for placement of abandoned children with their original or foster families rather than in institutions.
- Raise awareness of **domestic violence** by including information/training on the health consequences of DV and the importance of sensitive treatment of victims in health outreach programs to men, women, male and female youth generally (including through *mahallahs* [women’s committees], etc.) and health care providers specifically.
- Develop and implement a **domestic violence (DV) screening tool** for health care providers.
- Use **healthy lifestyles, healthy family education/outreach** approaches to provide critical health information, both on evidence-based medicine and on sensitive topics such as male reproductive health and domestic violence. Provide targeted training for health professionals and community leaders (especially in rural areas).

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Work with reform efforts to facilitate the **development and registration of NGOs** that respond to community needs.
- Continue support for **legal clinics for the indigent**.
- Provide training to legal staff, and encourage the addition of **representation and assistance for domestic violence victims**. (see DV below)
- Support efforts of rule of law initiatives to work with Government of Uzbekistan on **dispute resolution alternatives** to courts, such as mediation and/or arbitration.
- Support efforts of **condominium associations** to include condominium disputes in legislation that provides for administrative procedures rather than needing to go to court.
- Support existing and nascent **DV shelters, support services, and hotlines**.
- Expand public awareness of **trafficking in persons** to include trafficking of men for labor exploitation. Identify an at-risk profile for men and consider targeting some business development activities to those men and their families. Encourage greater support for trafficking victims, including repatriation, short-term shelters, long-term integration (e.g. halfway houses), skills training, stigma reduction, and support for children of victims.
- [EG, HE and DM] Collaborate with other sectors in providing emerging women and youth (male and female) leaders from EG and HE programs (including youth power centers, water users associations, and agribusiness activities) with **training in leadership, decision-making, and other skills** needed for local governance and the development of civil society.

Cross-cutting

- Engage with **donor coordination on gender issues** through the UN's Gender Working Group (GWG). This structure could be strengthened by consistent participation by USAID representative(s) serving as part of the GWG.

I. Introduction

The USAID/CAR Gender Assessment was conducted from October 10 to November 22, 2009. It was supported jointly by the Women in Development Indefinite Quantity Contract (WID IQC) Task Order for Short-Term Technical Assistance and Training (STTA&T), implemented by DevTech Systems, Inc., and the USAID/Central Asian Republics (CAR) regional mission based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with country offices in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

II. Background on the Central Asia Region

The legacy of decades of Soviet rule still affects the development of the five countries that comprise the former Central Asian Republics (CAR) – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Unlike some other countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), the Central Asian countries did not achieve independence through a broad-based movement with democratic leaders. In fact, in a referendum nine months before the official end of the USSR (March 17, 1991), the people of Central Asia overwhelmingly voted to stay with the Soviet Union. The transition period since independence in 1991 has been marked by social and economic difficulties as well as political stagnation with dynastic leadership structures in most countries, where the former Communist leader of each former Republic became its first president. Only two of the countries have changed leaders since 1992¹ – Kyrgyzstan in 2005 after President Akayev fled the country in a bloodless coup, and Turkmenistan in 2007 after the death of President Niyazov (called *Türkmenbaşy*).

Natural resources, particularly oil and gas, have provided a financial safety net for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and fueled Kazakhstan's breakout economic development in the region. On the other hand, the resource poor countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are struggling with poverty and political instability compounded by a "brain drain" to their richer neighbors. Furthermore, tensions flare in the rich and fertile Fergana Valley that straddles Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which has a religiously conservative population.

In addition to long-standing economic and political problems, outmigration, regional conflicts, religious differences, increasing gender inequalities, and the struggle to define a national identity have emerged as some new developmental challenges in the area. The lingering effects of a planned economy still impact all sectors of society.

As part of the Soviet Union, ethnic populations in Central Asia shifted both through planned migration and mass forced deportations from other areas. Ethnic Russians also relocated to Central Asia with the promise of preferential employment and educational opportunities. Since declaring independence in 1991, CAR countries have experienced significant outmigration to Russia (and to Kazakhstan from the poorer CAR countries), which has created a brain drain resulting in severe shortages of doctors, teachers, scientists, and other skilled professionals in much of the region. Preferences for local language and ethnicity have pushed out many ethnic Russians, and men and women of all nationalities have been enticed by the greater employment opportunities and higher salaries offered in the Russian Federation. The outmigration has also resulted in demographic imbalances in some rural areas where the majority of men are working abroad, resulting in separated families, and dependence on remittances, among other impacts. For internal migration within a country, the Soviet *propiska*² system of local registration still

¹ The initial post-independence acting president Akbarsho Iskandarov resigned in 1992 in an effort to end civil unrest. The then-speaker of the Parliament, Emomalii Rahmon, took over as head of government in 1992 and has been the president since 1994 in Tajikistan.

² *Propiska* refers to residency permit for one's official place of residence.

exists formally and/or informally, creating barriers to education, health and other critical social services when individuals or families relocate in search of employment opportunities.

Today's regional conflicts— border instability and refugees, the rise of religious extremism, and competition for water resources – also have deep roots in the Soviet period. Most obvious is the impact of the situation in Afghanistan – the destabilizing actions of the Taliban (whom the United States supported to counteract Soviet influence), the recent war and occupation, increased border instability, and refugees. The suppression of religious expression during Soviet times, and even more recently in each of the countries, as well as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, has fed religious extremism. The lack of institutions of religious teaching based on local languages and culture has opened the door to the influence of a wide variety of Islamic schools of thought, including some with more extremist agendas. The choices of agricultural crop selection and techniques in the Soviet planned economy were often poorly suited for the environmental realities of the region. These have resulted in increased competition for limited water resources, such as extensive irrigation for cotton production in Uzbekistan. Nearly full subsidies of energy and water costs also resulted in inefficient use of both resources, and pose challenges in current conservation efforts.



Since independence, each of the countries has struggled to define its individual national identity. A big challenge has been the desire to differentiate each nation's cultural traditions within multi-ethnic states that evolved and changed under the imposition of Soviet rule. The risk from a gender perspective is that patriarchal traditions from an earlier era are being refashioned in contemporary society, detracting from the progress toward gender equality that was achieved during the Soviet era and in the first years of independence. Women's progress in the economy and in politics has stalled or, in some areas, regressed based on newly defined cultural norms that prioritize the woman's role as a home-bound wife and mother. These "norms" may contradict changing gender relations caused by the current economic situation and the impact of labor migration that in some areas has created new patterns of autonomy and responsibilities both for those who leave and those who stay at home. Nevertheless, this period of definition also offers an opportunity for each country to establish a modern and inclusive national identity that integrates the best from each chapter in its history and that supports the officially endorsed goal of gender equality.

The lingering effects of the Soviet system of a planned economy can still be felt in nearly every sphere of development activity. In addition to agriculture, other sectors of the economy still suffer from planning that does not reflect market realities. Economics education lags behind because many in academia were trained under the previous regime. Private enterprise is slow to develop as the marketing concepts are often poorly understood and relevant market information is not readily available. Additionally, many in government are still biased toward Soviet-style economic policy "planning" that takes a top-down approach toward information rather than assessing market needs. The health care system required major reforms to institute evidence-based medicine, to remove distorted incentives for excessive hospital utilization, and to promote prevention activities and treatment protocols to respond to previously hidden health problems and newly emerging issues.

However, the shift to rationalize government budgeting has also resulted in persistent unemployment and the dismantling of some of the more progressive aspects of the social safety net with respect to gender. New costs – both formal and informal – imposed on citizens by health care and education reform threaten the previous system of more equal access. Of particular concern to working women and their families, the daycare/kindergarten system has largely disappeared throughout the region. Widespread corruption has also plagued reform efforts, including petty corruption by underpaid public servants (e.g., extra payment and gift requirements) and grand-scale corruption by oligarchs and high government officials.

Since 1992, USAID has provided over \$1.7 billion in assistance to the former Central Asian Republics (CAR). The assistance budget has varied greatly year to year, depending not only on the development needs, but also on the strategic importance of the region and each government's desire to engage in reform activities.

III. Methodology

The five country CAR gender assessment was conducted through the joint funding and guidance of the USAID/CAR mission based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the USAID/EGAT/WID office in Washington, DC. The assessment is based on a desk review and fieldwork in the region during the period October 9 – November 22, 2009. The Scope of Work is attached as Annex A.

The Team. The gender assessment team consisted of a two-person international team – Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin – accompanied for two weeks by one USAID/Washington staff member, and assisted by a local gender expert or USAID gender point person in each of the five countries. Susan Somach, who previously worked with the USAID/CAR mission on gender issues, served as Team Leader with primary responsibility for the assessments in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan and the final gender assessment report. Deborah Rubin, of Cultural Practice LLC, took the lead on the Kazakhstan and Tajikistan assessments. Audra Degeys, a Rotary Fellow currently serving as Gender Advisor for the Bureau for Asia and the Middle East, was on the team for the Kazakhstan assessment.

Desk Review and Fieldwork Preparation. Prior to departure, the gender assessment team conducted a desk review of gender materials and information available on the five CAR countries, USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) guidance on gender, and CAR programming. These included: the current USAID/CAR Strategic Plan (2001-2005) and applicable sections from the Operational Plan, Asia Bureau literature and policies on gender mainstreaming, background information on gender issues in each of the CAR countries, existing studies and other in-country data, gender assessments and action plans from other countries in the region, and USAID/M/OAA procurement guidelines. A bibliography of those resources as well as additional resources gathered throughout the assessment is included as Annex B.

The team also prepared for the field research. The scheduling for the assessments was closely coordinated with the country office representative (or designate) and the Program Office based out of Almaty, Kazakhstan. Kelley Strickland took the lead in coordinating all activities. Organizations and individuals to interview and the information needed to complete the assignment were identified. In-country travel and site visits were arranged in coordination with USAID Mission priorities and inputs, balancing the need for an assessment of activities in the capital cities and those outside the capitals to get a regional perspective.

In-country Fieldwork. The fieldwork was challenging to plan due to the limitations of country conditions and weather (the approaching winter), political and administrative scheduling considerations, and availability of international team members. The in-country portion of the assessment was conducted over the time period October 11 – November 23:

- October 11 – 16: Entire team in Almaty, Kazakhstan
- October 17 - 25: Deborah Rubin and Audra Degesys in Kazakhstan (Almaty and regional trips to Shymkent and Astana)
- October 17 – 28: Susan Somach in Uzbekistan (Tashkent, including meetings with Samarkand stakeholders)
- October 25 – November 8: Deborah Rubin in Tajikistan (Dushanbe and regional trips to Khujand and Khulyob)
- October 28 – November 10: Susan Somach in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek and regional trips to Kant and Osh)
- November 11 – 22: Susan Somach in Turkmenistan (Ashgabat and regional trips to Mary and Turkmenabat)

All three international team members participated in the first week of Almaty meetings with CAR regional staff and multi-country implementing partners as well as basic gender mini-trainings for regional staff. USAID staff assisted in Kazakhstan (Rabiga Baytokova) and Uzbekistan (Ilgiza Sharipova), and external gender experts assisted in Kyrgyzstan (Gulnara Ibraeva), Tajikistan (Sharigul Amirjanova) and Turkmenistan (Gulistan Yazkuliyeva). Local interpreters and drivers were utilized in every country.

Meetings/Interviews. The gender team met with USAID staff from the Regional Technical Offices, Country Office Teams, the Regional Program Office and the Regional Contracting Officer; selected implementing partners; government officials (where feasible); international organizations; other donors; and local gender experts. USAID Mission staff developed the country interview schedules based on limited guidance from DevTech Systems, Inc. and the Gender Assessment Team. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in each country with a wide variety of individuals and organizations. The team also conducted focus groups in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. A full list of contacts for each country is included in the report as Annexes C through G.

The interview process included open-ended questions on the concept of gender, the process used by projects and missions for identifying and addressing gender differences, successes, challenges, and emerging issues. Annex H contains a list of sample assessment questions for each of the four main categories of interviewees: USAID/CAR staff, implementing partners, international organizations and donors, and local gender experts.

Gender Briefings/Mini-trainings. The gender assessment team conducted three sessions of two-hour gender briefings/mini-trainings for USAID/CAR regional staff in Almaty. A similar session was conducted for USAID staff in the Tajikistan country office. Expanded versions of the mini-training with additional interactive exercises were conducted for USAID staff in the Turkmenistan country office and separate sessions were held for USAID staff and implementing partners (with English-Russian interpretation) in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. A full list of attendees for all gender briefings/trainings for the regional and country offices is included as Annex I. Unfortunately, few regional technical office staff participated in any of the three mini-training sessions in Almaty. Evaluation forms from the trainings were left with the CAR Program Office in Almaty and with the gender point person in the country offices, and are available upon request. The training materials, including the PowerPoint presentation and a list of training activities, are attached as Annex J.

Limitations. The assessment is primarily based on fieldwork and also draws on available data and analysis from other sources. However, there are a number of limitations which should be noted:

- **Limited timeframe:** This assessment was conducted in a very short period of time – two weeks or less in each country – which meant that there was insufficient time to meet with all of the implementing partners, donors, etc. who may have been able to offer relevant insights.
- **Division of Gender Assessment Team:** Due to timing and funding considerations, the Team was divided for the gender assessment fieldwork with little opportunity to consult on findings and analysis. Specifically, the Team worked together for only four working days in the regional CAR mission in Almaty, after which Susan Somach conducted the fieldwork in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan and Deborah Rubin continued fieldwork in Kazakhstan (with Audra Degeysys) and then continued on to Tajikistan. Thus, the country analysis is nearly exclusively that of the primary author(s).
- **Limited regional travel:** For each country, USAID staff selected an additional site(s) for fieldwork to offer regional perspectives other than the capital cities. However, the short timeframe limited the number of locations (only one or two) that could be visited and the amount of time during which interviews could be conducted (one or two days).

IV. Conceptual Framework

This Gender Assessment was developed within the framework of the USAID Automated Directive System (ADS), last modified on November 5, 2009, which states that “[G]ender issues are central to the achievement of strategic plans and Assistance Objectives (AO), and the [USAID] is striving deliberately to promote gender equality, in which both men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural, and political development; enjoy socially valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights.” Moreover, it states that “[C]onclusions of any gender analysis performed must be documented at the country strategic plan, AO, project, or activity approval stage.”³

This assessment reflects the following ADS terminology:

Gender is “a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female. As a social construct, gender varies across cultures, is dynamic and open to change over time. Because of the variation in gender across cultures and over time, gender roles should not be assumed but investigated. Note that ‘gender’ is not interchangeable with ‘women’ or ‘sex.’”⁴

Gender Equality is “a broad concept and a goal for development. It is achieved when men and women have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. It means society values men and women equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they play. It signifies the outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.”⁵

Gender Equity “is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.”⁶

³ ADS 201 3 9.3, effective 11/5/2009

⁴ ADS Glossary Addition 11/5/2009.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Sex is “a biological construct that defines males and females according to physical characteristics and reproductive capabilities. For monitoring and reporting purposes, USAID disaggregates data by sex, not by gender. Gender and sex are not synonyms. See ‘gender’.”⁷

Since gender relations are defined differently in different places, their context cannot be assumed, but must be investigated. This inquiry does not necessarily require primary data collection. There already exists a significant body of literature and network of experts who have documented gender relations in most cultural settings and have identified many gender constraints for development. As noted above, a bibliography of key references is listed in Annex B.

USAID recognizes the importance of conducting investigations on gender relations in its requirement that gender analysis is a mandatory component of planning development activities. Gender analysis is a type of socio-economic analysis that can draw on both qualitative and quantitative data. In the context of development assistance, it is a tool that helps to illuminate the links between the existing gender relations in a particular society and development problems that need to be addressed. Gender analysis identifies types of gender differences and inequalities that might otherwise be taken for granted – such as how men and women have different access to and control over resources, carry out different social roles, and face different constraints and receive different benefits. Conducting a gender analysis also entails “a study and analysis of factors supporting, reinforcing, and reconstructing inequality between men and women. The gender inequality is more related to social structures and institutions reproducing inequalities rather than to lack of skills and resources.”⁸ Once highlighted, many of these differences can be addressed and alleviated by careful design.

A gender assessment is used often as a synonymous term to gender analysis, but differs in some respects. A gender assessment at USAID is neither a research project nor a program evaluation and it does not typically measure program impact. It is an analytical effort that reviews national policies on gender and conditions of gender inequality, USAID processes related to gender integration, and sectoral gender issues affecting USAID projects and programs. The assessment offers recommendations relevant to current and future USAID programming in the country or region. To operationalize the recommendations, additional analysis likely will be needed to refine the goals and objectives of specific projects.

V. CAR Regional Overview

The CAR Mission is somewhat unique as a regional mission, in that the five countries of Central Asia under its operational mandate have experienced a long history under that same socio-political-economic system of the Soviet Union. Despite some geographic and historic commonalities, the countries are not a monolithic entity and one-size-fits-all program planning and implementation would not be appropriate. Such an approach would ignore historical differences that are becoming even more pronounced nearly two decades since independence.

A. Gender Trends and Conditions

From a gender perspective, both women and men in all of the CAR countries benefited from the Soviet Union’s focus on gender equality in education, health care, and employment. Working mothers were not only encouraged, but expected to participate as active contributors to economic life, and were supported by childcare at work and paid maternity leave. Women were also encouraged to get involved in political and economic decision-making bodies (although most positions were perfunctory, rather than conferring any real authority). Nevertheless, women still carried the majority of the burden for household work,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNDP no date: 7.

including responsibility for housework, children, and the needs of the elderly – resulting in the double burden. Sex-segregated patterns of employment that were established during Soviet times remain common today in the region. Women predominate in low-status, low-paid employment categories such as education and health care; men dominate in industrial work and hold more senior positions in government and in the private sector.

After independence, women and men have faced some different pressures with the economic collapse and restructuring of the economic, political, and social sectors. Initial research throughout the whole former Soviet Union indicated that women suffered additional challenges as the social safety net was rapidly crumbling or being actively dismantled in many countries. Without childcare support and protections for working mothers, some women returned home and others stopped having children (resulting in negative population growth). The downsizing of the public sector and the preference for hiring men (who did not have childcare or other time-consuming family responsibilities) in the newly developing private sector led to greater unemployment among previously working women. Women seeking alternative livelihoods struggled to finance entrepreneurship activities due to a lack of ownership in land, the family car, or other assets suitable as collateral for SME loans. Instead, women became the majority of shuttle traders, a business that required only small amounts of startup capital.



Men struggled when many factories closed while women were more willing to take the newer lower-paying service sector jobs. The loss of status caused by unemployment and sinking earning potential drove some men into depression and unhealthy lifestyle activities, such as drinking, drug use, and risky and violent behavior. Many men across the region have sought employment outside their home countries and that process of outmigration has its own risks and difficulties, discussed later in this report. Economic hardship among men has also created problems in getting married, especially where the tradition of paying a bride price is still practiced, and has been cited as a contributing factor in the increase in bride kidnapping, early marriage, and informal marriages.

Moreover, there are competing socio-political models of “womanhood” – the Soviet past, the new influence of Islam, the redefining of a historically-based national identity – all of which contain patriarchal elements. Thus, many Central Asian women have expressed the concern that they are struggling to reclaim what progress they previously achieved against a tide of new challenges to gender equality.

It should be noted that gender concepts are perceived differently in Central Asia (and the rest of the FSU) than in the West, based on different historical perspectives. Thus, it is critical to approach gender issues within the local context, considering background references as well as current trends. These issues are discussed in greater detail in the section “Conceptual Issues on Gender” for each country.

B. Regional Recommendations

Below are general recommendations for regional programs that operate in several or all CAR countries. The relative importance of these recommendations varies from country to country. See the country-specific report for additional relevant detail.

Economic Growth

- Continue to support **microfinance and SME lending**, focusing in under-resourced areas where women need income generation activities, and/or where unemployed men are at risk for labor trafficking. Encourage successful women borrowers to “graduate” from high-interest micro-loans and expand their businesses through SME loans.
- Ensure that **agricultural technical assistance programs** provide technical assistance responsive to local conditions, not by limiting areas of women’s activity according to their roles in gardening, food preparation and processing, but by providing support for their involvement in farm management and expanded crop and livestock production.
- Include gender considerations as an integral part of **economic policy reform** activities, using gender budgeting and other types of gender analysis to identify likely gender impacts. Utilize local gender expertise as needed to conduct targeted research on topics such as pension reform, land reform, budget reform, etc.

Health and Education

- Maximize gender-sensitive approaches in the **health improvement program** to promote best practices for maternal and child health (encouraging male involvement), reproductive health (focusing not only on women and men regarding family planning, but also men’s needs regarding STIs, infertility, and urology), TB and HIV prevention and treatment (considering women’s risk and stigma issues as well as men’s).
- Ensure that targeting of MARPs in the **health outreach program** works in each category (e.g., sex-workers, ex-prisoners, migrants) with both sexes (where possible), and respond appropriately to their differing challenges and needs.
- [Cross-cutting] Partner with local gender experts and gender-focused organizations in developing and promoting **gender education** programs (for children, teens and adults of both sexes) to overcome gender stereotypes and support grassroots efforts to define gender in the local context.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Promote **street law and basic legal education** programs that respond to the lack of information among the general population, the need to provide information on rapidly changing laws, and the importance of providing information on secular law to those who are studying exclusively at religious institutions. Legal topics covered should be sure to include gender issues such as land rights and inheritance, protection from violence against women (including DV), equal rights and opportunities, women’s rights as human rights, role of ombudsman, etc.
- Integrate women’s rights issues, such as sex discrimination and violence against women, into **training programs for lawyers and judges** (e.g., use as examples in ethics training or mock trial activities).
- Support **NGO activities** that are demand driven by community needs and not donor-driven. Look for opportunities to encourage men to participate in civil society activities (especially in health, education, and social sector areas dominated by women).
- Promote **women’s political participation** at all levels – national, regional and local – and help those women who succeed in getting elected to be effective legislators.

Cross-cutting (all sectors)

- Work with other Embassy programs (INL, Democracy Commission) to promote a coordinated community response to **domestic violence and trafficking in persons** – by (i) supporting

hotlines, crisis centers, and shelters; (ii) providing training for police, prosecutors, judges, and media; (iii) promoting referral mechanisms to include health care, psychological counseling, legal support, shelter, economic opportunities, etc. to fill the gap until the national governments pick up support.

- Consider the practicality and advisability of mixing services,⁹ and encourage public-private partnerships where local government authorities provide in-kind support such as rent-free space and utilities.

C. Conceptual Issues: USAID

Over the past three to four years, there has been little to no coordinated substantive attention to gender at the USAID/CAR mission. Efforts to maintain a gender working group and to institutionalize a systematic approach to gender issues throughout the procurement process and project cycle were sidelined by budget and staff cuts and lack of expertise among mission staff. The development of a new country and regional strategy offers an opportunity to rethink the mission's approach to integrating gender into its programming and procedures.

Currently, the responsibility for ensuring that USAID policies on gender are followed is held by the Program Office. The primary gender focal point staff member, however, does not have sufficient time allocated in her work program to provide the necessary sectoral and procedural guidance for the Kazakhstan mission as well as the other country programs in the region.

To summarize, here are the key operational constraints to improved integration of gender:

- Lack of mission policy on gender as a relevant area of effort, with neither incentives nor disincentives to address or investigate the issues;
- Inadequate staff time and expertise in the gender focal point position description to provide sufficient topical and procedural guidance;
- Lack of awareness and understanding by the USAID staff guidance on gender;
- Lack of awareness and understanding by the USAID staff and partners of the value of and mechanics of integrating gender into sectoral programming;
- Lack of baseline information on gender disparities among projects' target populations or in the institutional policies; and,
- Lack of knowledge among technical staff of the gender-related problems or practices, including good practices, in their projects.

More effective attention to gender issues in procedures and programming can be achieved. The key is to assist the technical staff in understanding how and why alleviation of gender disparities, whether by men or by women, can improve the effectiveness of their projects. This in turn requires providing technical staff with specific tools and resources to correctly identify the gender disparities that programs need to address in proposals and to monitor in M&E systems. It means moving staff away from dealing in stereotypes and towards a more comprehensive database of gender issues and inequalities specific to each country and the region.

⁹ See Surtees, Rebecca and Susan Somach. *Methods and Models for Mixing Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Persons in Europe and Eurasia*. Washington: USAID. 2008.

D. Operational Recommendations

Gender Analysis

The ADS states that a gender analysis is to be conducted as part of program and project planning and design. There is no ONE methodology for conducting a gender analysis. Questions and approaches will vary by topic and by objective. In principle, a gender analysis will identify the relevant areas of gender inequality faced either by men or by women in society that have been demonstrated or are expected to affect the ability of a USAID-funded program to achieve its results.

Gender analyses can be conducted by USAID staff, consultants, or by the implementer who is preparing a response to an RFP/RFTOP/RFA/LWA/APS. A helpful gender analysis will:

- Identify gender disparities: where are or what are the inequities?
- Identify gender-based constraints: what causes the inequities?
- Provide suggestions for strategies or actions to address these constraints within programs/activities
- If available, provide examples of good practices
- Suggest new ways to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data that will result in better measurement of decreasing/increasing disparities

USAID staff members interested in carrying out gender analyses can find guidance for specific sectors in the documents listed in the bibliography (Annex B).

Mission Order on Gender Integration. Mission leadership can begin by approving a mission order on the importance of gender integration. The mission order can be supplemented by a collectively developed “vision statement” that accurately captures how the technical and administrative staff see their roles in improving opportunities for supporting equality of opportunity for men and women in Central Asia, as provided for in each nation’s constitution. A vision statement provides a goal of something positive to move toward. The following example is one such statement, but it is only illustrative:

USAID/CAR supports the goal of gender equality in all mission offices and programs. The mission recognizes that “gender” does not refer only to women, but includes both men and women. Mission management will establish appropriate gender policies in consultation with staff and will be responsible for disseminating and implementing those policies on programs and operations. All mission staff members share a responsibility and have a distinct role to play in achieving the goals of gender equality. In their relations with each other, the staff of USAID/CAR will be a model for equitable gender relations in conducting their development programs and their relationships with implementing partners, government officials, and members of the wider community in each Central Asian country.

Gender in the New Strategy 2010-2012. The crosscutting nature of gender requires an integrated approach throughout the portfolio to achieve results. The new strategy document should include a statement identifying the critical gender disparities in each of the countries that will be addressed through USAID programming. In each sector, at both the Assistance Objective (AO) and Intermediate Results (IR) level, including the AO narratives, a set of gender-based constraints can be listed, drawing on the examples provided later in this document. Overall, the strategy document should include a general commitment to gender integration, perhaps in a gender vision statement (see example above). It can also

express a goal of increasing the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, not only on training participation, but also to provide a baseline of gender gaps for each sector and to allow for measurement of progress towards closing those gaps. During this strategy period, targeted programming (e.g., men-specific or women-specific) will still be necessary to mitigate some gender-specific imbalances, such as improving men's access to health care or expanding women's economic opportunities.

In addition, the strategy can articulate a recognition that each mission in the region needs to identify a "gender officer" and to strive towards making gender work a significant component of this staff member's workplan; that USAID will work with other USG agencies to find appropriate synergies for improving gender equality; and that USAID will also work with the rest of the donor community on gender issues by providing mission representation to gender coordinating working groups.

Gender-Sensitive Results Framework/Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The results framework should include gender-specific or gender-inclusive language throughout, and all people- and business-level indicators should be disaggregated.

Gender Analysis in All Activity Approval Documents. The ADS requires that a gender analysis be included in all activity approval documents and the statement of work or program description for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. At a minimum, the gender analysis must identify the existing areas of gender inequality, whether experienced by men or by women, and outline how the proposed activity should address this disparity. The use of the term "gender neutral" should be discontinued since it is more often interpreted as "gender blind" in that it does not consider gender implications of program activities and risks exacerbating existing disparities, an outcome which is contrary to USAID policy on gender.¹⁰

The Program Office, in collaboration with the Contracting Office and technical teams, should (i) ensure that no new activity documents are approved without the required integrated gender analysis and (ii) try to remedy the omission in newly approved activities that are non-compliant and in the first year of activity. See ADS 201.3.11.6 on Project/Activity Planning (effective 11/5/2009). For sector-specific gender analysis tools, see Gender Analysis Resources by Sector section of the bibliography (Annex B).

Gender in the Procurement Process. Effective gender integration into programming starts and ends with the procurement process. To ensure that partners implement programs that address gender disparities, they have to be asked to do so in the Requests for Proposal (RFPs), Requests for Task Order Proposal (RFTOPs), Requests for Assistance (RFAs), Leader with Associates (LWA) or Annual Program Statements (APS), which will require both enhancing technical knowledge as well as procurement oversight.

¹⁰ The revised USAID policy on gender explicitly states that "anticipated programming results are: 1) fully examined regarding the possible different effects on women and men and 2) the design is adjusted as necessary to ensure equitable and sustainable program or project impact" (see ADS Revisions to 201.3.9.3 and 201.3.11.6 Gender Analysis, Effective Date: 11/5/2009).

Gender Component in Evaluation Criteria in RFPs/RFTOPs/RFAs/LWA/APS. Use especially for activities with identified gender issues, and ensure that selection committee reviews applications/proposals for the gender capacity. Examples are:

- Gender-relevant research, background analysis, or assessments, and consultations with women's advocates working in the sector and with female and male customers as part of the activity's concept development process.
- Gender analysis as part of the activity design and training, and as a routine part of procurement actions (i.e., subcontracts, task orders, Scopes of Work [SOWs] for consultants).
- Gender-equitable participation in different aspects of the activity.
- Sex-disaggregated data for indicators and targets.
- Gender criteria in evaluation of the project's progress and impact.

For staff qualifications look for:

- Key personnel who have demonstrated sectoral and gender analysis skills.
- Position descriptions, including for leadership, that explicitly require expertise in gender among US- and field-based staff.

For institutional capacity look for:

- Demonstrated institutional commitment to gender issues in previous contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants.
- Gender equitable institutional policies and mission statements, including equal opportunity employment practices.
- Publications on gender issues.
- Experience in participatory methodologies, working with diverse constituencies, and ensuring stakeholder participation.

Monitoring Workplans and Reporting for Gender Integration Compliance. All contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements should include a requirement that contractors/grantees/implementing partners collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data and make recommendations on how to adjust programs in response to gender inequities.

Gender in Assessments/Surveys. The Mission should include gender components in all sectoral assessments, including questions designed to identify and analyze anticipated gender differences. To achieve maximum results, assessment teams should ensure gender diversity both in their team composition and among their informants/interviewees.

Provide Gender training to Mission Staff and Implementing Partners. To strengthen mission capacity in gender integration, the team recommends both a general training on gender analysis and USAID gender policy as well as sector-specific trainings on identifying and addressing gender-based constraints. To be worthwhile, this training should be attended by technical staff, including team leaders, as well as administrative and support staff. Additional trainings should be organized for implementing partners so that both Chiefs of Party (COPs) and field staff should attend. (Note that the Women in Development [WID] Office offers to assist missions— regional missions especially— regarding requests for training on integration of gender in USAID programs; contact the WID Office for details: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/gender/index.html)

Increase Gender Sensitivity of Implementing Partners and Sub-Grantees. To the greatest extent possible, implementing partners and their sub-grantees should be encouraged to maintain equitable staffing and operational procedures (including prohibitions on sex discrimination and sexual harassment).

(Re-)Establish a Mission Gender Working Group. The previous Gender Issues Team was operational until key leadership left the Mission four years ago. With new leadership, a Mission Gender Working Group could be reestablished with the goal of serving as a coordinating body for gender within technical teams, the Program Office, the Procurement Office, and each country office of the Mission. The Gender Working Group should serve as “a community of practice” with a Team Leader (Mission Gender Advisor or designate) who will provide leadership and coordination and Core Members who will act as technical consultants within their respective technical office, the Program Office, the Procurement Office, or the country office. Team members should be allocated time in their terms of reference for both virtual and face-to-face meetings to discuss their approaches to gender integration. Ideally, the Gender Working Group should consist of a diverse combination of men and women, American and Foreign Service National (FSN) members. Also, an online gender library containing useful gender resource materials and linkages should be added to the Mission’s shared network drive and maintained by the Mission Gender Advisor or designate both at the regional and country levels.

External Gender Technical Assistance. To achieve the desired level of technical competence, it may be necessary to use a variety of approaches beyond training current staff. It may instead be possible to support the work of the Mission Gender Advisor and/or Gender Working Group with local consultants and a virtual team from USAID/W to develop short and focused pieces of guidance for the technical staff. Seminars could be offered on a monthly or bi-weekly basis to cover changes in USAID guidance, sector-specific gender issues, useful research findings, examples of best-practice, etc. It may be possible to hire an experienced gender specialist with dedicated responsibility to assist in gender integration and provide/access available resources in all technical areas (a mid-career fellow, current USAID staff, Personal Services Contractor [PSC], or regional expert). It will be necessary to provide regional/local consultants with an understanding of how USAID functions to ensure that the expertise gained from them fits program parameters.

Participate in/Establish Donor Coordination on Gender. The Mission Gender Advisor should also participate in donor coordination opportunities on gender at the regional level and the Gender Point Person for each country office should participate at the country level.

VI. Kazakhstan Country Report¹¹

A. Gender Trends and Conditions in Kazakhstan

Historical Gender Legacy. Gender relations in pre-Soviet Kazakhstan reflected the dominance of Kazakh ethnic identity, especially in the north and west of the country, and its herding heritage. Women were important economic actors in pastoral society and had some independence of movement and action. However, women’s primary roles were to be wives and mothers. Newly married couples typically lived with the husband’s parents. Daughters-in-law helped their mothers-in-law with household responsibilities. Political systems were clan-based and dominated by men.

With Soviet rule, pastoralists became sedentary agriculturalists, industrial workers, and office clerks, and gender relations changed along with these new economic roles and different settlement patterns. Non-Kazakh immigrants (mostly but not only ethnic Russians) also moved into the region in large numbers. The Soviets sought to release women from what they viewed as the weight of pre-modern, anti-Soviet custom. Some cultural practices, such as payment of bridewealth (*kalym*) at marriage,¹² were formally prohibited. The Soviet system established strong programs of child care, education, and medical care, and

¹¹ This chapter was prepared by Deborah Rubin with Audra Degeesys and Rabiga Baytokova.

¹² “Kalym” as historically practiced involved a payment, usually of grain or livestock, more recently clothing, money, and/or household goods, made by the groom’s family to the bride’s father in two phases: one around the time of the engagement and the other near the time of the marriage ceremony. It is quite different from the Indian custom of dowry which is given to the bride as a pre-inheritance from her father.

women – thus relieved from some aspects of domestic work – were expected to participate as active contributors to economic life, especially in these social sectors. Women were also encouraged to take leadership positions in the agricultural cooperatives and in party politics. Sex-segregated patterns of employment that mirrored those in the rest of the Soviet Union were established and remain common today, where women predominate in education, health care, and other social domains, and men are dominant in industrial work, senior positions in government, and, now, business.

Gender Policy. The fall of the Soviet Union brought an influx of donor funding on a range of human rights issues, including women’s rights and gender equality. The newly independent government led by President Nazarbayev supported a range of legislative efforts ensuring that gender equality was formally written into the Kazakhstani constitution, government policy, and its legal structure (see Box 1). A council that became a commission, now called the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family Demographic Policy, was formed to ensure support of gender equality. The Commission operates out of the President’s office in Astana and is represented in each branch of government at the region (*oblast*), province (*rayon*), and local level (*akimat*). The chairperson of the National Commission is Aitkul Samakova; she also is an advisor to the President.

The Commission developed both a strategy and an action plan on gender equality. The most recent strategy (2005) covers implementation for the associated plan of action from 2006 to 2016. The strategy supports equal rights and opportunities for both men and women and speaks to the justification and activities for achieving it in six key arenas, including politics and public administration, the economy, education, reproductive health, gender-based violence, and the family. The strategy also contains a discussion of a “gender-sensitive public consciousness,” by which they mean building an appreciation for gender equality among the public by improving gender imagery and content in mass media.

The Government of Kazakhstan has associated achievement of gender equality with its goal of integration into the world community as a full and equal partner. The list of international agreements and national protections of women’s rights are both numerous and impressive; it has signed over 60 international agreements, including key declarations related to gender.

Nonetheless, the government itself recognizes there are key gaps in legislation and practice. The national gender strategy lists among its weaknesses that implementation of the gender equity policy has been poor, that the legislative base is “imperfect,” and that there still exists a “lack of formal equality between men

Box 1: Chronology of Post-Independence Gender Policy in Kazakhstan

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1993 | Article 1 of the constitution guarantees equality of rights and freedoms irrespective of sex and prohibits all forms of discrimination (Article 1). |
| 1995 | Constitution of 1995 declares that ratified international treaties supersede national laws. |
| 1995 | Council for Family and Women’s Affairs and Demographic Policy established. |
| 1998 | International declarations adopted, including Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. |
| 1998 | Council (above) reorganized into National Committee on Family and Gender Affairs |
| 2003 | Concept of Gender Policy |
| 2003 | Passage of the Land Code granted women rights to land, including agricultural land, on terms equal to those for men. |
| 2005 | Convention against Human Trafficking |
| 2003-2005 | PENDING: Legislation on gender-based violence and trafficking in persons |

and women” in some areas, including protection of rights and decision-making.¹³ The national constitution, for example, contains no definition of discrimination, although Article 1 specifically prohibits discrimination. There is a significant gap between the principle of equality for men and women declared by the constitution and its implementation in practice. It is thus difficult to bring to the courts cases about discrimination in the workplace. The team did not identify any groups currently working to resolve this issue.

“Owing to the existing stereotypes regarding the distribution of roles in society, women have fewer rights and opportunities in life than men.”

—Government of Kazakhstan Gender Strategy 2005: 44

In 2010, Kazakhstan is taking on the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), offering an opportunity to push for movement on gender equality as part of a larger emphasis on supporting human rights in the country. Many of the interviewees stated that it is critical to enact the laws mentioned above on equal rights, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

Perhaps in response to the responsibilities of the leadership of the OSCE, there was recent success in the signing of a critical piece of legislation pertaining to women’s rights that had been stalled in the Parliament for nearly seven years. A bill on domestic violence was signed into law by the President on December 5, 2009.¹⁴

Another bill on equal rights and opportunities and some desired clarification on the laws pertaining to human trafficking have not yet been addressed. There are multiple explanations for the slow progress on these critical pieces of legislation, despite serious efforts by many women’s NGOs advocating for passage. Some point to concrete concerns about a lack of funding to construct and maintain the domestic violence shelters called for in proposed bill. Others interviewed suggested that lack of movement is due to deeply held beliefs that patterns of domestic life should not be open to criminal prosecution, but should be handled through community organizations, including religious institutions, rather than by the police.

Another view suggests that in the years since independence there has been a building reaction in some circles against the secular state and its association with the Soviet past. This belief is linked to growing resistance to the equality in gender roles that is part of the secular state and seen as contrasting with “true” or “real” Kazakh identity.¹⁵ It is unclear, but worth further investigation, whether this belief – a “retraditionalization” of Kazakh identity – is now influencing the larger context in which gender policy decisions are being taken.

Gender and Politics. Under the Soviet system, women had high levels of participation in the local and national government, if not at the topmost positions in the party. Quota systems ensured 35% representation by women in the Supreme Council. Today, the involvement of women in the formal political sphere and in political party activity is not high, although there are no formal barriers to women’s

¹³ Government of Kazakhstan 2005: 45.

¹⁴ The draft law that was reviewed in June 2009 by the OSCE and subsequently signed into law was an improvement over earlier versions. It provides a definition of the “victim” of domestic violence that includes those who both married and unmarried; it includes “not only acts, but also the “threat” of causing physical, psychological, sexual or economic abuse;” and it establishes the right of a victim to call for an order of protection against the perpetrator. The law also calls for the establishment of crisis centers and shelters (OSCE 2009). The OSCE also noted limitations in the law, including its focus on acts of violence that are “deliberate.” It is also limited to violence which occurs between people who share a residence, excluding those having a previous marital or family relationship but no longer living together in ways that are inconsistent with provisions in other legislation. The details of the funding for and implementation of new crisis centers and shelters are not spelled out (OSCE 2009).

¹⁵ Sandj 2005: 304.

involvement and there are a number of prominent women in highly visible positions.¹⁶ Kazakhstan holds a rank of 74 among over 140 countries in its level of women's participation in national parliaments.¹⁷ Lack of the financial resources needed to engage in pre-election campaigning, negative stereotypes against women in leadership positions, and the logistical burdens of employment and domestic chores have all been cited by respondents and in research studies as reasons restricting women's political engagement at the national level. The president has resisted the calls of women's NGOs and international groups for a quota for women's participation in decision-making positions.

The spheres of political power and decision making at the top level on economic and social affairs are still dominated by men. ...The lowest levels of self-government are represented mostly by women, but their number decreases as the growth of status rises (UNDP/Kazakhstan and British Embassy/Astana: 2009: 13).

In the most recent parliamentary elections (2007), women comprised approximately 15 percent of the total number of candidates, but the final seating is determined by the parties rather than by the exact number of votes they receive. After the 2007 election, women held 18 of 107 seats in the *Majhilis* (just under 17% of the total), up from 8 women members (10% of the total of 77) in 2003. The Senate has only two women members (4.3%).

In other areas of government, the limited representation of women persists, even as many donors, including USAID and organizations such as the OSCE, have offered trainings and awareness programs to women on political leadership and political literacy since independence.

There are currently three women in ministerial positions. Women hold over half of the civil service positions, but are under-represented at the higher levels. There is now only one woman minister and one woman vice-minister. Women have a large presence within the judicial systems, and are the majority in some sectors, such as among regional judges, where in 2008 they were 52%.¹⁸ They are nearly 30% of the membership of the Supreme Court.

The gender-based constraints to increasing women's positions of authority are social attitudes that discount women's leadership abilities, the expectation that women bear responsibility for domestic affairs that limits their opportunities to establish important political networks, and their relative lack of financial capital to underwrite election campaigns.

Demographic Situation. The population of Kazakhstan in 2008 was 15.77 million and women hold a slight plurality with 8.15 million women (51.9%). This percentage has been about the same over the past few years.¹⁹ The plurality of women increases at higher age brackets, as women have a significantly higher life expectancy than men. In 2008, life expectancy for females at birth was 72.4 years but for males it was only 61.9 years, nearly an 11 year gap.²⁰ The difference in life expectancy is related to men's higher rates of drug use, alcohol abuse, violence, and diseases such as TB and HIV/AIDS. Women suffer from maternal mortality and diseases including anemia and breast cancer.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious problem in Kazakhstan and reflects the lack of equity between men and women. The definition of GBV is wider than only physical violence against women or violence that occurs only within the home (i.e., domestic violence). It can entail rape, date rape, sexual harassment, battering, and intimate partner violence including homicide (and femicide). Prevalence of GBV in Kazakhstan is difficult to measure as it has been neither well-defined nor well-recorded by either the

¹⁶ UNIFEM 2005: 43.

¹⁷ IPU 2009.

¹⁸ GoKZ 2009: 94.

¹⁹ GoKZ 2009:4.

²⁰ GoKZ 2009:11.

police or hospitals. Since 1999, a division on “women’s protection from violence” has operated within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They have branches throughout the country which are supposed to offer legal assistance and to analyze data on the issues. The recent signing of the new “Prevention of Domestic Violence” law calls for more accurate record-keeping of the incidence of domestic violence. Current studies from the Government of Kazakhstan (GoKZ), crisis centers, shelters, women’s NGOs, and a range of donor studies offer the following estimated parameters of the problem:

- In 2004-5, among young women aged 17 to 29, 29% reported having experienced sexual harassment at work or at school;
- In 2004-5, women accounted for 91% of the victims of a violent crime, and 65% of those were sexual assaults;
- In 2008, crisis centers around the country counted a total of 21,679 calls made to hotlines, of which over one-quarter (28%) reported acts of physical violence against women.

Some sources report that some aspects of gender inequality have worsened since independence.²¹ Although principles of gender equality are well-established in the law, the lack of legal discrimination has created a sense of complacency about men’s and women’s relative opportunities and inhibits efforts to address remaining objectives.

Some interviewees stated their belief that gender inequalities were rising rapidly among the younger generation and particularly those residing in or coming from the southern region of the country. Stereotypes about either the persistence of or the emergence of patterns of restrictions on women’s education, mobility, and economic opportunities were prevalent among development workers, NGO staff and leadership, and “people in the street.” Individuals made statements such as “the people in the south have more gender issues [because] they are closer to the Uzbeks” or “rural areas are more traditional and more patriarchal” or that “the mentality [in the south] is for the women to sit at home and obey their husbands and [for] the men to keep [support] the family.” It was reported that “They [southern Kazakhs] have a ‘different’ mentality” with an emphasis on the word ‘different’ with the assumption that ‘different’ was self explanatory. It is not clear to what extent these statements accurately reflect the reality of gender relations in the south or other regions of the nation.

B. Conceptual Issues on Gender

Ideas about gender in Kazakhstan today are undergoing significant change and represent something of a paradox. On the one hand, many interviewees in this assessment contended that “there are no gender issues in Kazakhstan.” Interviewees were asserting their understanding and experience that gender equality is a central principle of Kazakh law and their recognition that formal discrimination based on sex is illegal. However, the government’s own statistics and other sources of data reveal significant gender disparities in everyday life.²² These gaps appear to have been increasing since independence. Moreover, many people express a belief or perception that women, especially in the home, are subordinate to the control of their husbands or fathers. Acceptance of gender-based stereotypes was common among interviewees, and offered with certainty that these situations would not change quickly.



²¹ ADB 2006, UNDP 2005.

²² See among other sources listed in the bibliography: Agency on Statistics of Republic of Kazakhstan. 2009. *Women and Men in Kazakhstan Statistical Brochure*. Astana: Republic of Kazakhstan; Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2009. On the Statement of the Plan of Action for 2009-2011 on realization of the Strategy of Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016. Astana: Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2005. Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016. Astana: Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Although both men and women are expected to marry and to have children, the care of children and other domestic tasks remain women's responsibilities. In the Soviet period, state-supported daycare centers, medical care, and other social services helped employed women maintain their homes and families. Today, these services are less available and more expensive, and working women have to juggle responsibilities at both the work place and at home. This double burden is a barrier to advancement at work and can precipitate marital discord at home. Gender roles have become rigidly differentiated and both men and women repeatedly stated that regardless of women's level of employment or income, the "man is the leader," especially at home.

In interviews, some respondents reported that employers discriminate against younger women who have small children out of concern that these mothers will miss too much work caring for sick children or dealing with the school and other activities. To address the multiple responsibilities of women, the National Commission on Women's Affairs is preparing a report advocating for formalization of flexible schedules in the workplace, so that women who have children in school may work part-time or on different schedules without forfeiting their benefits or seniority. Currently, the law allows people to work flexible schedules in certain situations, but there is an associated loss of salary. Many respondents suggested greater support of gender education for both children and adults to change peoples' attitudes about gender roles and to encourage greater sharing of home and family responsibilities between men and women.

The essential principles of gender equality enshrined in Kazakh law may not be accepted equally throughout the country. Kazakhstan also exhibits regional differences in gender roles and ideology. Gender differences are more pronounced in southern Kazakhstan, which is strongly influenced by neighboring Uzbekistan. It was reported that even educated women do not actively seek employment outside the home, but are expected to take care of their families. There are many restrictive attitudes that inhibit women's increased participation in business, such as a fear that the women will grow "too independent" and not fulfill their household obligations. Some respondents also raised concerns about women's interactions with other men outside the home, such as in dealing with government officials or men in their offices or in their work.

Several interviewees deeply involved with gender issues reported that the past few years have seen a move away from the term "gender" because the term has been poorly understood and associated more with both international donors and Russians, and it not seen as a local concept. Many ordinary people are completely unfamiliar with the term (as it is a borrowed word recently incorporated into the Russian lexicon) and those working in government who are familiar with the term understand it as only addressing women's issues or ensuring equal participation of men and women in government committees or boards. In interviews with non-government Kazakh nationals, many admitted they did not know that it was a word (or knew what it meant).

C. Sectoral Findings, Risks, and Opportunities

Economic Growth

Women are an important part of Kazakhstani economic life, but their contributions differ from those of men. They are a visible presence in offices and marketplaces, reflecting a relatively high rate, though now a falling one, of labor force participation. From a rate of around 80% participation in the early 1990s, women now have a 66.7% rate, compared to 76.1% for men.²³ However, the high degree of horizontal sex-segmentation in the work force ensures that their contribution to GDP is lower than men's.

²³ Agency on Statistics of Republic of Kazakhstan. 2009. *Women and Men in Kazakhstan Statistical Brochure*. Astana: Republic of Kazakhstan.

Notwithstanding the presence of a few women in key positions as leaders of business, women in general are estimated to hold only 3% of management positions.²⁴ Overall, the average wage gap between women and men is increasing, from 30% in 1990 to 38% in 2002.²⁵ These gaps exist even in professions where women are most visible. In education and health care, for example, where women hold 74% and 80% of jobs, women's salaries are 86% and 82% of men's earnings, respectively.²⁶ Women's average wages in 2003 were estimated to be 60% of men's.²⁷

Women are minimally represented in the higher paying jobs in the mining and petroleum industries which account for 35% of the national GDP. Not only are there legal prohibitions for women against operating heavy machinery, but few women study the subjects in university that would qualify them for these positions in engineering and industrial management. In contrast, as a result of loss of jobs in other sectors and the migration of men to find work in other countries, women are a rising proportion of those engaged in the much lower paying agricultural sector, where labor productivity has been falling each year from 1998 to 2003.²⁸ Women are legally entitled to land on equal terms as men according to the Land Code of 2003, but in practice social attitudes limit their ability to manage their own farms. Legislation restricts the allocation of land only to "individuals with special agricultural knowledge or qualifications, or practical agricultural experience."²⁹ Furthermore, few rural women who are farmers have had adequate education generally or the training in agriculture or agribusiness that would entitle them to accessing their rights to participate in farm management. Thus, despite being a sizeable minority of agricultural workers, women face significant barriers in moving from farm worker to farm manager or owner.

The proportion of those studying in agriculture (men and women) overall is only slightly more than 1% of the college and university population (approximately 8,000 students total). Of this small group, only a tiny proportion go on for further study in the field.³⁰ As a result, the sector is not being supported by a sufficient level of skill or qualifications to transform the rural economy.

Women comprise a slight majority of all self-employed workers (51%) at the national level. In rural areas, 64% of women are reported as self-employed, primarily in agriculture. This work offers no pension or benefits, and typically returns only a low level of compensation. The predominance of women in the agricultural sector and in self-employment or informal employment explains much of the overall high levels of women's poverty: in 2006, women were estimated to account for 60% of the poor.



In sum, women's participation in the national economy is decreasing despite their higher levels of education and they continue to be channeled into lower-paying positions in a relatively limited number of professions. The risks of the cumulative gender disparities are succinctly summarized in the Asian

²⁴ ADB 2006: 28; UNDP 2005: 7.

²⁵ ADB 2006:28.

²⁶ ADB 2006: 29.

²⁷ UNDP 2006: 8.

²⁸ ADB 206: Table 3 and text, page 27.

²⁹ ADB 2006: 33.

³⁰ In 2008, only 7 women were granted Ph.D. degrees in the agricultural sciences, compared to 97 men, and the absolute numbers of those pursuing higher level degrees in the field in Kazakhstan has been decreasing over time (Statistical brochure 2009: Table 6.1, page 60).

Development Bank (ADB) report³¹. It states: “[T]he impacts of these gender-based distortions on the labor market include lower average incomes for women, which increases their vulnerability to poverty, and loss to the economy of highly educated workers.” There are few incentives for women to seek work in new areas or for employers to hire or to promote women into higher positions when their participation in the labor force is so severely constrained by a lack of social services to help with their domestic responsibilities.

While USAID programming cannot be expected to transform long-standing societal inequalities through a small set of funded activities, the Agency is required to identify the disparities existing in society to ensure it does not replicate them in its own programs but instead works to change them. The purpose of gender-equitable programming is to ensure that investments achieve both economic and equity goals by addressing the gender constraints that limit the achievement of stated goals in a specific activity. The purpose is not to achieve equity goals over economic ones. The current economic growth activities have not thus far proactively addressed the gender disparities discussed above. As discussed earlier, the team was repeatedly told that there are no gender issues in Kazakhstan, in contrast to the documented disparities reported here.

Two of the current programs, The Kazakhstan Small Business Development Project (KSBD) and the regional Business Environment Improvement (BEI) project, from the initial requests for proposal (RFP) were characterized as “gender neutral,” meaning that project activities should be and were being implemented without regard to sex. Yet no gender analysis had been conducted as part of the project design to confirm the absence of preexisting inequalities. Nor were the activities’ impacts monitored in a way that allows for measurement of gender impact. In reality, few situations are gender-neutral, since laws, policies, and programs will have different impacts on men and women. In a situation of gender inequality, however, a presumable “gender-neutral” approach runs the risk of exacerbating existing disparities, an outcome which is contrary to USAID policy on gender. See Operational Recommendations in CAR Regional Overview section above.

Although gender is considered a cross-cutting issue in both the KSBD and BEI projects, and staff members recognize that the impacts of policies and policy changes will be different on men and women, there is no formal process for the project to address these possible effects or to design reforms to achieve more equitable results. The project does not have any staff member tasked with gender integration. Sex-disaggregated data on training participation appears to be the only gender-related information reported to USAID from either project, although at least one of the KSBD incubator sites reported that it would be able to analyze information it keeps on the entrepreneurs who use the incubator space and its services to obtain sex-disaggregated data. It was estimated that were 80% of the business owners in the incubator were men and 20% were women.

In the BEI project, it was asserted that the actions taken to improve the process of business licensing or reforms to commercial law were made without regard to sex. In fact, men and women are differentially impacted by conditions in the business enabling environment. Studies have found that formal registration of a business increases its likelihood of growth and access to key resources including credit, but that men and women are differentially able to take the step of formalization, given their different endowments of time, knowledge, and capital (Marston 2006). A gender analysis to identify the policy reforms that would best result in greater gender equity in the business environment would make this project more gender sensitive.

There are several gender issues that are relevant to the KSBD program. The program is advertised in newspapers and it is not clear that this is the most effective communication channel for reaching women.

³¹ ADB 2006: 28.

Men and women interested in establishing new businesses or expanding existing ones are not equally capable of meeting the program entry requirements, such as the ability to pay a monthly rent up front or risk a penalty. Typically, women's patterns of saving and expenditures differ, and they may be better served by a weekly payment rather than an upfront monthly fee. It was also suggested that women would benefit from access to a microcredit program and additional trainings in business development as part of the program.

Another key difference is in the patterns of men's and women's business networking. Several interviewees explained that many business arrangements are made through connections that are established and maintained in social settings. For men, these locations include the baths and the bars where there are no women. It is somewhat more difficult for women to make these connections either with men or with other women as their mobility is limited both by social conventions and household responsibilities.

The Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs (RTL) Project is implemented by AECOM International Development in three countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. It has two major components. First, it supports Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organization by working with the Ministry of Trade in their negotiations. Second, it promotes trade facilitation through a suite of activities, including working with the customs offices and conducting trainings on customs issues, developing an electronic "single window" for exports, facilitating business cooperation, monitoring the World Bank's "Doing Business" indicators, and addressing risk management in inspections, among other areas.

There was no overarching gender analysis done in conjunction with the project proposal preparation or at the initiation of project activities and, as in the other EG projects, there is no project staff member assigned to develop or monitor gender issues or sex-disaggregated data collection beyond training participation. The contract required that some activity "to do with gender" be initiated and the approach developed was to design a stand-alone grant to research the operation of shuttle traders in the region. The topic was not chosen as a result of any systematic gender analysis but because it was already known that many of those involved in the shuttle trade were women. According to several interviewees, the content of the questionnaire was somewhat problematical and no clear findings were obtained.

Other gender-related concerns emerged with the establishment of the electronic single window for exports. While intended to simplify the export process and increase access to information and forms for all exporters, it was not clear if the creation of the electronic window would inadvertently restrict the access for those people, including perhaps a larger proportion of women, who would either not have access to the internet or whose literacy skills were not sufficient to manage the electronic format. It was said that agents would handle many of these processes for those unable to access the forms directly, but this raises other questions about women's and men's differential access to and ability to interact with the (presumably male) agents. It was also not possible to determine if paper forms would still be available. The team suggests that additional training for both women and men about these new procedures should be incorporated into the project activities to make sure that measures are put in place to maintain and enhance women's access.

In summary, the serious sex-segregated composition of the Kazakh economy needs to be addressed through programming that is sensitive to gender disparities in men's and women's different patterns of access to key productive resources including education, time, and financial capital.

Health

Health indicators for both women and men are poor relative to other countries with similar levels of economic performance. Gender disparities are significant. Men have a much lower life expectancy (61.9 years) than do women (72.4) according to GoKZ statistics; other donors report similar gaps. Men also have significantly higher rates of infection of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and diabetes, as well for drug use and alcohol-related illnesses.³² Many stereotypes were raised in the discussions of men's health, including comments such as "Men don't care about their health" or that men's ideas about health are linked to a Russian legacy of alcohol abuse. The health disparities that men face are an expression of gender inequality in health care and are also linked to the gender stereotypes. Social beliefs about appropriate roles for men encourage behaviors that can result in disease and/or create disincentives to accessing and maintaining treatment.

Women's health indicators, although better than men in some areas, are not particularly good. The maternal mortality ratio, i.e., the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, is given by the GoKZ figures from its statistical agency as 46.8 in 2007 and 31 in 2008, but other sources that build on multilateral donor data bases suggest it is much higher, up to 140, significantly more than the average for the region of 46.³³

No clear trend is discernible since independence. Most maternal mortality cases are the result of hemorrhaging and/or obstetric bleeding (33.9% of cases) and abortions (23.8%), both of which could be reduced through better emergency and/or hospital services and better uptake of contraceptives.³⁴ Anemia, an indicator of poor nutrition, is also very high among women, at a rate of about 43% among women of childbearing age.³⁵ In some regions, particularly near the Aral Sea in the West, anemia is correlated to environmental damage resulting from proximity to nuclear test sites (ADB 2006: 47). Infertility is another problem experienced by nearly one-fifth of Kazakhstani families; breast cancer also affects an increasing number of women, currently at an incidence rate of 35.5 per 100,000. This rate is lower than in many Western countries, but mortality is high because women do not seek or receive treatment until the disease is fairly well-advanced.³⁶

According to UNICEF monitoring, rates of the mortality of children under five years of age have been cut dramatically, nearly by one-half, between 1990 and 2007, from 60 to 32 (ChildInfo), but GoKZ figures show that these rates are higher for boys than for girls.³⁷ Child labor is an issue in some of the rural regions of the country.

In short, Kazakhstan's health situation remains poor. Gender disparities are evident, and the mortality and morbidity of men, in particular, appear to be causally linked to gendered expectations about "masculine" behavior – drinking, thrill-seeking, promiscuity, and sometimes drug use and criminal behavior. "Men and women have very different health-care-seeking behavior and opportunity costs for using health care services. Thus, to affect health care outcomes, different public health messages are needed for men and women."³⁸

According to the interviewees, the RFPs for the two new regional health projects, the Health Outreach Project (HOP) and the Health Improvement Project (HIP), included a requirement for "gender equity" but this was not well-defined, other than stating that men and women should both be included in trainings and

³² Agency on Statistics, GoKZ 2009.

³³ Agency on statistics 2009: 15; UNICEF, ChildInfo 2009: http://www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality_countrydata.php.

³⁴ ADB 2006: 47; GoKZ 2009; UNDP 2005: 39.

³⁵ GoKZ Statistical Bureau 2009: Table 5.3, page 34; UNDP 2005: 38.

³⁶ ADB 2006: 47; UNDP 2005.

³⁷ Agency on Statistics 2009: 17.

³⁸ ADB 2006: 47.

that sex-disaggregated data on training participants should be reported to USAID. In the past, many of the health programs were focused largely on women. Not all staff members were aware that a focus on women does not necessarily reflect a gender perspective. The bio-medical orientation of the projects has meant that attention to the social aspects of gender has often had a lower priority. This has been changing, however, in some activities, especially as the gender disparities faced by men have received more attention.

Previous projects also emphasized the supply side of health care. In the new programs, addressing the characteristics of demand will be more important. This raises the visibility of gender issues to better explain men's and women's patterns of service use and compliance with physicians' instructions. Since in Kazakhstan many doctors are women, it would be helpful to undertake a survey to determine if that is a disincentive or incentive for men seeking treatment.

Project staff members are also quite aware that regional differences are important within Kazakhstan and also across countries for the regional programs. Specifically, ethnic and regional gender stereotypes affect effective content in public health messaging.

Areas that were identified as needing new activities included attention to the clients of sex workers, who until now have not been part of the behavior change projects, and more of an effort to work in HIV prevention efforts with men who have sex with men (MSM).

Democracy and Conflict Management

Although Kazakhstan's constitution and policies espouse principles of equality of all persons, a number of other pieces of legislation create less democratic conditions in practice. In recent years, laws have been put into place regulating religious practices and aspects of mass-media, including the internet, and restricting freedoms of assembly. These restrictions affect both men and women, yet governance and politics is a distinctly gendered arena in Kazakhstan. As discussed earlier, the large majority of formal government decision-making positions at the national level are held by men. Women's participation in the public sphere has been decreasing since the Soviet period. Women in positions of technical authority, such as Parliamentarians and Ministers, do not necessarily have the power to shape or control the actions of others that might be expected of people in those positions elsewhere. A Presidential order requires that women be appointed at decision-making levels in each level of government. Some individual women have been able to rise to high levels within government or in other legislative and executive positions. For example, in 2003, a woman was elected Deputy Prime Minister. In 2009, there were three women ministers in the national government. Women are also better represented at lower levels of government, but still remain a minority.

Barriers to advancement of women in government and in political parties, however, mirror those already discussed in other sectors: the double burden of domestic and home responsibilities which restricts women's time and mobility for participating in political life, social attitudes which do not support the idea of women in power, and lack of access to independent financial resources that are needed to conduct campaigns, travel, and establish the wide networks of contacts necessary to support advancement.

The world of the NGOs is, by contrast, dominated by women, as both leaders and staff members. Most interviewees described women's roles in the NGO sector in very positive terms. They spoke about women's passion for the social causes supported by NGOs, such as support for women's and general

human rights, support for victims³⁹ of gender-based violence, access to education for the disabled, and various health programs.

Notwithstanding the positive impact of women's NGOs in the social sectors, there are also reasons to be wary of this sex-segregated structure. Interviewees explained that the work did not pay very well and repeatedly commented that few men could afford to work in the sector and support their families. The growth in NGOs in the 1990s paralleled the loss of jobs in social services, many of which were held by women, and the loss of the social services themselves. Thus women started small organizations as a means of survival and as a tool to access international donor funds for these causes. In short, the diversion of women into NGO work can be seen as another aspect of the skewing of women's labor force participation and a loss of highly educated professionals and their skills to the wider economy.

There are also questions about the efficacy of the NGO work. There are some, such as Kazakhstan Business Women Association, which have been very successful in mobilizing resources and in creating positions of influence in the public sphere. These, however, are the minority, and most NGOs work at a very local level and their staff are largely volunteers. For the most part, the topics on which they choose to work are closely linked to the socially approved roles for women or concerns of women: home and family, education, health, and social services. Informants mentioned that groups tackling larger political and economic issues within Kazakhstan seem to be led by men, such as the NGO "Human Rights Bureau" led by Evgeny Zhovtis, a human rights activist who recently was sentenced to jail for his involvement in a traffic accident which killed a pedestrian. It would be of interest to survey key NGOs to determine the categorization by area of activity, sex of leader, and effectiveness for a more accurate assessment of the strength of women's efforts in this sector.

Several activities in USAID programming address the problems identified above regarding restrictions on the growth of multi-party democracy and political parties and the limitations on reporting and investigation experienced by mass media in Kazakhstan. Both USAID and US Embassy programs have also supported either educational or professional exchanges, although there was concern expressed by some interviewees that fewer qualified boys and men participated. Within these programs, key gender-based constraints that inhibit the full participation of both men and women in governance, politics, civil society are social stereotypes about women's leadership, including those perpetuated through mass media; general gender stereotypes portrayed in mass media; time constraints faced by women in handling their double burden of responsibilities at home and in the workplace; and the difficulty of engaging men in NGO management and leadership.

New or emerging areas. Interviewees were asked to offer their opinions about new issues that they felt were important for USAID to consider in its thinking about the new five-year strategy. What was surprising was the overwhelming response to the team's questions suggesting greater support for gender education. Repeatedly, interviewees emphasized that gender disparities were not a consequence of problems in legislation, but were rooted in people's attitudes about what is appropriate for men and for women.

A second area of interest surrounded the differential impact of climate change on men and women. Climate change and climate variability may change the crop mix appropriate for cultivation in ways that will shift allocation of labor on the farm, reduce investments in agriculture, and/or encourage a greater level of out-migration. All of these shifts have gendered consequences that could necessitate greater involvement of women in the study of agricultural sciences and agri-business.

³⁹ Interviewees used the term "victim" as a translation from the Russian word for "sufferer" and did not use the common U.S. terminology of "survivor."

A related issue is that of the environment and health, especially reproductive health. Several comments were made about the impact of chemical pollutants and radioactive wastes on reproductive and other aspects of health on both men and women, although in different ways. Agricultural investments in irrigation systems in western Kazakhstan reduced water flows to the Aral Sea and consequently increased levels of contaminants in the soil and water in these areas, with adverse health consequences. Kazakhstan also has large deposits of uranium and other industrial materials, including copper and PCBs, that have been associated with health problems as a result of poor processing and waste management. This is a sensitive subject to address, but one that has been acknowledged by members of the NGO community, in news reports, and in efforts by the Kazakh government to develop policies on waste disposal.

D. Sectoral Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Analyze the sex-disaggregated data reported to USAID on **training and participation** to identify areas where either men or women are underrepresented and need support.
- Identify areas of **policy reform** that would improve gender equity in the business environment and on gender issues and trade to provide direction for future studies.
- Use multiple **channels of communication** (e.g., radio, flyers, women’s group meetings) to reach both men and women about programs and requirements and encourage partners to use a similarly broad reach in hiring both men and women into project positions.
- Support both single-sex and mixed-sex functions to facilitate **business networking**.
- Consider recruiting a business to provide **day care or after school care** so that other women entrepreneurs could more easily participate in the project.
- Consider how the project might promote linkages to other local **microcredit** programs to enhance women’s abilities to start and maintain their enterprises.
- Consider initiating **alternative payment plans** for rent and other services to help both women and men address cash flow problems that informants mentioned as one of the reasons new businesses dropped out of the program.
- Add **gender-related indicators** (such as those being developed by the USAID-funded Booz Allen Hamilton BIZCLIR project) to the “Doing Business” indicators.
- Address gender issues in the customs officials training curriculum.
- Review potential gender barriers that might arise with the electronic single window process.

Health

- Develop **indicators** in HIP and HOP to measure relative changes between men and women as well as the count of absolute numbers currently proposed.
- Develop **gender-sensitive behavior change programs** to address men’s health disparities.
- Conduct study on Kazakh **ideas of masculinity** as related to men’s patterns of disease and health seeking behavior.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Develop program opportunities to work both with mixed-sex and single-sex groups and include specific components to improve attitudes towards **women’s leadership and political engagement**.
- Identify program opportunities to bring men into **NGO activities**.
- Provide support to professionals who provide legal, financial, and medical services to those seeking **NGO assistance**.

- Offer **gender training to media** to broaden understanding of gender beyond women and family issues.
- Conduct study to determine if there is a generational and/or regional break in **attitudes and practices of gender equality**, either through existing mechanism or new grant or contract option.

Gender-based violence activities

- Increase **support to NGOs** working on crisis hotlines, rape counseling, shelters, and women in prisons.
- Develop activities to improve the monitoring of domestic violence and other gender-based violence incidents.
- Support advocacy efforts on the passage of **equal rights and opportunities law**.
- Support **gender education in schools** and through public service messages to change attitudes towards gender-based violence.

New or emerging areas of interest

- Develop components on **gender equality education** that could be incorporated into other sector-specific activities.
- Pay attention to the health consequences of environmental pollution.
- Investigate the country-specific **gender dimensions of climate change**.

VII. Kyrgyzstan Gender Assessment⁴⁰

A. Gender Trends and Conditions

Historical Gender Legacy. Gender issues in Kyrgyzstan are not only filled with paradoxes similar to other post-Soviet transitional societies, but also paradoxes of those that are simultaneously transitioning to democracy while strengthening their Islamic identity. For example, while women’s participation in civil society is at a high level, so is domestic violence. Bride kidnapping is on the increase, yet so are the numbers of women graduating from post-secondary education.⁴¹ And, while religious women activists may demand the right to wear a *hijab* (headscarf) and attend a *madrasah* (religious school), they are also demanding political rights within religious decision-making structures. Overall, women in Kyrgyzstan have felt the brunt of transitional upheaval, from decreasing economic opportunities to increasing violence against women (including a resurgence of bride kidnapping). The crumbling social safety net, the small numbers of women in top political positions, and the pervasive gender stereotypes have contributed to women’s sense of disempowerment since independence. For men, unemployment meant the loss of status and the push to leave school or home to find a job. Men in Kyrgyzstan have responded in different ways to the frustration of economic hardship: some have turned to “traditional values” or religious institutions to redefine their roles; others have turned to violence and unhealthy habits such as alcohol and drugs; still others have simply adapted as best they can.

Gender Policy. Kyrgyzstan has ratified all the relevant international human rights documents, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Abolition of All Forms Discrimination in Respect of Women, which provides a mechanism for women in the country to bring individual complaints through the international human rights systems. The GoKG has also recognized a number of International Labor Organization

⁴⁰This chapter was prepared by Susan Somach with Gulnara Ibraeva.

⁴¹ Handrahan, Lori. Gender and Ethnicity in the ‘Transitional Democracy’ of Kyrgyzstan. *Central Asian Survey* (2001), 20(4), 467–496.

(ILO) Conventions related to issues of equal rights of women and men as a successor of the USSR: (Convention # 45, 1935 On application of women’s labor in underground works; Convention # 100, 1951 On equal remuneration for men and women for the work of equal value; and Convention # 111, 1958 On discrimination in the field of work and occupation; among others).

The principle of equal rights is specified in the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic as the equal rights of men and women to participate in the elections and referendums; to obtain, to change and to keep citizenship; to receive education, medical aid, pensions and social benefits; to have individual labor; to marry and to bring up children; to have parental leave for baby-care; and to have property. Additionally, they are equal in a number of civic, economic and political rights. In 2007, the Constitution of the KR (article 13, paragraph 4) was amended to guarantee not only equal freedoms and rights, but also the equal opportunities to execute them as well.

The 2003 Law “On Main State Guarantees to Provide Gender Equality” and the 2008 Law “On State Guarantees on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women” strengthened the responsibility of the state bodies and the local self-governance bodies to implement this policy through article 3 “Principles of the Present Law” and article 7 “Monitoring and Reporting of the Gender Policy Implementation” of the Law. The state’s guarantees to provide equal rights and opportunities have been extended through inclusion of additions in article 10 “Guarantees of Gender Equality in Hiring for State and Municipal Service” and the introduction of article 11 “Guarantees for Equal Suffrage.” The law also included article 26 “Competence of Authorized State Body in the Field of Gender Policy;” however, such a body has yet to be formally determined.

The Law “On Social and Legal Protection of Family from Domestic Violence” was passed in 2003 and amended in 2009 to take into account gender expertise. In 2009, the Supreme Court assisted civil society experts to conduct an independent monitoring of the implementation of the domestic violence law during which more than 20 court cases on the domestic violence were studied. One of the main conclusions of the monitoring showed that the court did not apply the Law correctly. Administrative cases qualified by the militia as “domestic violence”, according to the Article 66-3 of the Code on Administrative Responsibility, were often re-categorized by the courts as a minor offense.⁴² There were no domestic violence cases when the protection order was applied, although such an order would provide security for a victim of domestic violence from one to six months. Protection of victims cannot be provided by the administrative arrest or by the fine applied mostly by the courts to punish an offender of domestic violence. A protection order was used once in 2006, only in the Talas region, though it was categorized under article 364 part 1 (a minor offence). As a rule, cases on domestic violence never reach the court. For instance, in Jaiyl district, Chui region, the internal affairs bodies registered 60 cases of the domestic violence in 2007, of which only 3 criminal cases were initiated and 57 cases were refused initiation of proceedings on various pretexts. The women victims were not issued protection orders. In 2009, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) adopted an internal document directing the staff to strengthen their control over domestic violence issues and to improve work on the collection of statistics of domestic violence complaints.

The Election Code was amended in Article 72 Paragraph 3 to direct political parties to nominate no more than 70 percent of the same sex to the list of candidates for election to deputies of the *Jigorku Kenesh* (Parliament), and that the list should ensure that both sexes are represented in every three positions. Paragraph 5 of the same Article was amended to require that lists cannot be changed after submission to the Central Election Committee (CEC), and in case a candidate leaves his/her place, it is to be occupied by another party member based on the requirements of paragraph 3. As a result of this special measure,

⁴² Article 364 of the Code of Administrative Responsibility – Minor offence including unquotable speech in public places, abusive conduct and other similar actions, breaching public order and citizens’ peace brings to administrative fines or administrative arrest up 15 days.

the number of women increased from zero representation in the previous parliament to 23 persons (25.6%) today. However, this measure does not apply to the procedures for local *keneshes* (councils).

The Law of the KR #147 “On Reproductive Rights of Citizens and Guarantees of its Implementation” as of August 10, 2007 regulates public relations in the field of reproductive rights of citizens. The current unequal relationship between the sexes considers only the interests and wishes of a man and does not allow a woman to implement her legal reproductive rights in practice. This reality is reflected negatively both on her health and that of the future generation. Article 9 of the Law first protects a woman’s rights by stating that citizens have the right to make a decision on the number of children they would like to have and the time of their birth, in or out of wedlock, as well as the time between deliveries needed to secure mother’s and child’s health. But implementation of the Law is problematic as thus far, there were no precedents to the Articles of the Law being applied in practice.

The President has issued several decrees regarding gender equality issues, including the 2007-2010 National Action Plan:

- #240 as of August, 2002 On Further Improvement of Personnel Policy to Involve Women Leaders in Public Administration of the KR;
- #56 as of February 15, 2004 On Approval of the Commission on Gender Expertise of the Normative and Legal Acts under the Secretariat of the National Council on Family, Women and Gender Development Issues under the President of the KR;
- #36 as of March, 2006 On Measures to Improve Gender Policy;
- #24 as of February 5, 2007 On Approval of Provisions on the Order to Conduct Gender Expertise of Draft Normative and Legal Acts and Preparation of Corresponding Conclusions;
- #369 as of August 20, 2007 National Action Plan to Achieve Gender Equality in the KR for 2007-2010.

The national institutional mechanism on gender policy in Kyrgyzstan has been created and changed over many years, including the establishment of new institutions (for instance, a Special Representative of the President of the KR in the Parliament of the KR on Gender Issues) and abolishment of others (State Commission on Family and Women Issues). The essential gap in the national institutional mechanism is the insufficient normative assignment of the authorized bodies that are responsible for determining the priorities or the development of the national gender policy.

Since the administrative reform in 2009, the institutional mechanism responsible for implementation of the gender policy – the National Gender Council lead by the State Secretary – was restructured. As a result of the reforms, the position of a State Secretary was abolished, and the working structure was removed as well. The functions to implement the gender policy (combined with youth, family and childhood issues) were assigned to a newly-created Ministry of Labor, Occupation, and Migration. Nowadays, a leader of the new Ministry has asked for gender experts’ support to develop the concept of the structure of the Ministry. But there is no mention of gender policy even in the name of the ministry and the renewed Ministry of Labor, Occupation, and Migration has too many areas of focus. As a result, the prospects for implementation of a gender policy are tenuous.

On the strategic level, there is no structure in the President’s Cabinet that is responsible for gender policy. Who will formulate and develop the strategies of the gender policy is unclear. In late 2009, the Gender Council under the Institute of Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, a public structure, started its work.

Gender and Politics. Women represent 23 of the 90 members of Parliament (25.6%). Almost no top positions in the government are held by women. Although women are represented in chief or senior positions at many state agencies, they hold far fewer leadership positions in institutions whose policy has

significant impacts on women, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry, the State Customs Committee, and the State Agency on Religion Issues (no women represented).⁴³ There is a similarly low level of women in leadership in local government – from a low of 10.5 percent in Osh City to 26.9 percent in Chui *Oblast* councils.

Demographic Situation. The gender gap for life expectancy at birth in Kyrgyzstan is approximately nine years, 72.3 for women and 63.7 for men.⁴⁴ The difference is due to higher male mortality from infectious diseases, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, and a wide variety of traumas – due in part to drinking, smoking, and other risky behaviors. Women’s health risks include persistent high rates of maternal mortality, tuberculosis (although less than men’s rates), cancer and STIs. While there is a shortage of medical services in general, there is a lack of medical services for men’s healthcare in particular. For example, in Chui *oblast*, every *rayon* polyclinic has a gynecologist (1.5 per 10,000 population according to the regional statistics), but there is no urologist or andrologist. On account of the absence of special services for men and a fear of lack of confidentiality, many men prefer to access medical service in shadow clinics or even from non-professional “specialists.”

High unemployment and endemic poverty affect both men and women, although official statistics indicate women are more likely to be unemployed than men in almost all regions (the highest differential being in the city of Bishkek where women were three times more likely to be unemployed). As a result, a main demographic feature in Kyrgyzstan is external and internal migration. An estimated one-third of the workforce is employed abroad and a recent study⁴⁵ suggests an estimated one million internal migrants. As discussed earlier, both types of migration have a ripple effect through families and communities. External migration carries with it a host of risks, including trafficking of both women and men, especially with the demand exceeding the limited legal avenues for working abroad. The internal migration is particularly troublesome given the *propiska* issue that restricts the rights and freedoms of migrants, including in the areas of education for their children, health care, social protection (e.g., pension, disability support, etc.), labor rights, and voting. In some cases, the restrictions are legal and in others they are practical, such as when the cost of returning to their hometown may exceed the benefits to be collected.

B. Conceptual Issues about Gender

The term “gender” not well understood. As in other countries in the region, the term gender is more commonly understood to refer to women. It can also have negative connotations, such as being synonymous with “Western feminism” that is incompatible with local culture and family values. When gender as a social construct affecting both women and men is discussed, women often do not recognize that men have gender problems. Meanwhile, men tend to minimize women’s issues, believing that women are not discriminated against because, in their view, women have access to and control of whatever resources they want. This dichotomy in perception can be explained by the reemerging patriarchal views of what a woman should expect to control in her life that are more limiting than the vision women have for themselves.

Key gender laws passed, but implementation stalled. As discussed above, Kyrgyzstan has passed key gender laws: equal rights and opportunities laws, a domestic violence law, and a gender quota in Parliament with reserved positions in national government for women. Despite this significant *de jure* progress in gender equality, there is a lack of implementation of these laws that, in some areas, requires legal amendments to remedy. Legal changes may be difficult to achieve as there are already perceived

⁴³ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. *Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic* (2008)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ AUCA Social Research Center. *Discrimination Against Internal Migrants in the Kyrgyz Republic: Analysis and Recommendations*. Bishkek (2009)

conflicts between gender equality laws and “traditional” patriarchal values as well as the emerging conservative Islam in some parts of the country.

Gender implications of gap in life expectancy. As noted in the demographic risks section, there is a gender gap in life expectancy, fueled by unhealthy lifestyles, especially among men. Some contributing factors, such as unsafe working conditions at home and when working abroad, are less within the individual control of men, but reflect gender concepts of the “man as strong” and as the provider. However, other risky behavior such as smoking, drinking, drug use, unsafe sex, etc. can be reduced with appropriately tailored health interventions and public awareness campaigns that also need to tackle some gender norms about acceptable male behavior.

C. Sectoral Findings, Risks and Opportunities

Economic Growth

Unemployment and migration impacts. The migration issue mentioned in the regional section of this report has particularly severe impacts on Kyrgyzstan. The “brain drain” of educated and trained professionals to Russia and Kazakhstan has created a critical shortage of doctors and teachers in Kyrgyzstan. It was noted that virtually all of the TB doctors trained in the newest Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) treatment protocols have been lured away with promises of higher salaries, so much so that the Russian Minister of Health supposedly thanked Kyrgyzstan for its contribution to the Russia TB control program. The economic factors – unemployment at home and higher income opportunities abroad – leading to migration are not likely to be reversed anytime soon. The negative impact on those left behind, including wives (when the man leaves to fulfill his gender role as provider in the family) and/or grandparents (when both husband and wife leave), can be severe, especially if remittances are not received and if the migrants return with severe health consequences resulting from hazardous working conditions abroad. Internal migration also poses challenges discussed in the Demographic Risks section above.

Rural agriculture. Enhanced production and food processing from backyard farms could provide much-needed income to struggling families and single-headed households. However, those interviewed both in Kant and Osh indicated that there is little incentive to engage in such activities due to the mafia control of markets. More specifically, when backyard farmers try to sell their products in the local marketplace, aggressive “wholesalers” insist that they receive backyard farmers’ produce for very low prices. If the backyard farmers refuse, they risk their produce rotting without being sold at all. In one case, the stranglehold on the market was broken only with the good fortune of a buyer from Kazakhstan showing up who was willing to purchase directly from producers at a more reasonable cost. A local official in Kant indicated that the local authorities organize a weekly market that may offer an opportunity to avoid the mafia control. This issue would seem to be a serious threat to small-scale agricultural development programs that tend to benefit women and poor families.

Transportation/border issues for north/south. Another major barrier to economic growth and trade is the challenge of transportation of goods and people from north to south. The mountains form a natural boundary that adds time and transportation costs to the movement of goods and people alike. Realistically, this fact emphasizes the importance of north-north and south-south regional cooperation and of ensuring that development activities in the south are not dependent on Bishkek.

Continue and expand water user association activities. The Water Users Association activity – including the engagement of more women in the associations – seems both well received and successful in alleviating some of the challenges related to water availability and usage in rural areas. During a focus group discussion in Osh, women and men were equally engaged in a lively discussion about community

needs. Currently, there are few women in leadership positions in the associations, but the project activities seem to have developed the capacity of women to seek those positions in the future. Moreover, discussions among the group offered insights into opportunities to increase the economic and political empowerment of women in the community through improved water accessibility and usage. Moreover, men were eager to work together to find solutions to the back-breaking “men’s” work of digging earthen irrigation canals year after year. The community-building aspect that brings women and men together for common problem-solving seems to be one of the strongest reasons to continue supporting and deepening the activity.

Tax issues and patent/licenses for SMEs. The current tax regime for patent/licenses for SMEs creates an inequity among different types of businesses that more often than not disadvantages women business owners. The fee for a patent/license to open up a small shop or hair salon is based on a flat monthly charge regardless of the size of business or number of retail outlets run under that patent/license. Since women are typically smaller business owners and are less likely to open multiple shops, their relative tax burden is significantly higher than that of larger businesses, which are more typically run by men. The American Chamber of Commerce of Kyrgyzstan has identified this issue, but has so far not been successful getting policy-makers to consider changing it.



Gender implications of customs/trade reform. The customs/trade reform activity is beginning to work on issues that have gender implications and therefore need to include specific interventions to capture this information. In particular, customs process reforms will be evaluated based on customer satisfaction surveys. These surveys should collect and analyze information about the sex of the person who responds to the survey and the sex of the customs official who provides the service being evaluated. In this way, differences between service to men and women can be identified and whether there are any patterns of treatment depending on the sex of the service provider. Anecdotally, it was mentioned that the customs inspectors are almost all male. A second customs/trade reform issue with gender implications is whether the approach toward charging shuttle traders (who are predominantly women) based on weight as opposed to *ad valorem* is as beneficial to everyone involved as policy makers believe it is. In particular, the assumption is the bulk weight customs fees are less than what an *ad valorem* rate (which would require a lot of extra time at the border, and administrative costs for the customs service) would be. However, this assumption has not been tested through a representative sampling.

Gender budgeting issues in national budget. Based on discussions with parliamentarians, there is a need and interest in receiving technical assistance and/or training on gender budgeting, especially as it related to the planned social payments reform. In particular, the social payments reform does not seem to be connected to a gender equitable analytical framework that accurately reflects what it is supposed to cover (i.e., funeral benefits are being adjusted based on actual costs, but pregnancy benefits – which ironically are less than half the amount for funeral benefits – are being adjusted based on an incremental increase from the previous year without any consideration of actual costs). The discrepancy in approaches was pointed out as irrational at best and specifically gender biased at worst (especially since women are a small minority of decision-makers in the national budget planning process and therefore are not at the

table to lobby for these types of issues). Either way, the negative effects of such policy decisions impact whole families and the society in general.

Gender implications of pension reform. The Kyrgyzstan government is working on pension reform and already has sought/received some gender analysis on the policy implications of different reform schemes. It is not clear whether the analysis adequately covers all the relevant gender issues, such as differences in life expectancy, age of retirement, number of years in the workforce, time off for family leave or part-time employment, wages, typical job categories, etc. The expertise of people like Marina Baskakova, of the Moscow Center for Gender Studies, who provided the first gender analysis of post-Soviet pension reform (in Russia), might be useful as the policymakers are developing their reform package.

Health

Administrative barriers. Several of those interviewed mentioned that health services and education opportunities (including primary and secondary school) are still being denied to internal migrants who do not have a *propiska* (residency permit) for the location where they have migrated (usually seeking employment). In some cases, there is both a lack of awareness of rights among the migrants and the service providers alike. In others, the service providers are simply not following laws/regulations of which they are aware and may be seeking additional payments (corruption). This denial of health services contributes to the overall problem of maternal and infant mortality in Kyrgyzstan.

Rural health. Due to the brain drain discussed earlier, there is a lack of PHC doctors and specialists, especially in rural areas. Another rural health issue identified by the health team was that of Uzbek brides (of Kyrgyz men) who do not get registered with the Kyrgyzstan health service within the first five years they are living in the country. The problem is that the Uzbekistan government is canceling the citizenship of these women after five years and they are no longer eligible for services in Uzbekistan; and as a result of being stateless, they are not eligible to sign up for the Kyrgyzstan health services either.

Healthy lifestyles, sex education. The gender gap in life expectancy will likely improve if there were an increase in healthy lifestyles, especially among men. Women would also benefit directly and indirectly from preventative health education. Officially, the Kyrgyz school curriculum contains health education, which included anatomy and physiology. Anecdotally, several of those interviewed noted that the class had been dropped in some schools. Given the high rate of STIs in addition to reproductive health issues (e.g., reducing even further the use of abortion as a means of birth control), health education should be continued in the schools. Moreover, with the advent of religious schools and the new trend of male dropouts from school, pre-marriage counseling that includes sex education would also be worthwhile, especially if the curriculum includes accurate medical evidence-based information. Health education outreach efforts should include community elders and religious leaders, who already have an established role in spreading information within the community and have been involved in other similar efforts.

Reproductive/maternal and child health. Kyrgyzstan's rates of maternal and infant mortality are still among the highest in the region. Efforts should continue to include men as partners and to address specific female and male reproductive health issues as well (e.g., family planning, STIs, infertility). The shortage or absence of urologists or andrologists at health clinics poses a challenge to meeting the health needs of men.

Socially vulnerable populations. Plans for health outreach to MARPs already include programs aimed at returning migrants, ex-prisoners, and sex-workers. During discussions in the regions, local "public women" were raised as a missing hard-to-reach at-risk group. More specifically, there are women in most villages/towns known by the local populace to engage in prostitution on a local basis. These women do not fit the typical urban sex worker profile and are likely not reached by outreach activities. Nevertheless,

they can be key vectors in communities where people engage in risky behaviors and unprotected sex. Since both women and men are migrating for work abroad, they should both be included in outreach efforts though the nature of their vulnerability may differ. Moreover, internal migrants may also have health issues depending on their experiences and length of time away. Similarly, both men and women ex-prisoners are socially vulnerable, women arguably more so due to the additional stigma attached to a “fallen” woman who brings shame on her family upon her return.

Education

Teacher shortage. There is a lack of teachers in secondary schools. This problem is expected to get worse as the age of teachers is increasing and around 60% of working teachers are already retired or close to that age. For example, in the small *rayon* of Sokuluk, there is a shortage of 68 teachers (28% of all staff). Last year the balance was 133 new teachers of secondary schools and 83 teachers who left schools. Of the teachers who departed, 23 went abroad (Kazakhstan), 18 left for commercial structures, 16 teachers retired, 11 left for other spheres, and 15 left because of unknown reasons.



Enrollment and dropout issues. School enrollment is still very high in Kyrgyzstan, but the recent increase in male dropouts at the secondary level is concerning. It is not clear from the data what factors are most significant. Potential factors include the need to earn income, failing performance, lack of interest, bullying, leaving to attend unofficial religious schools, and other possible reasons. Additional research is needed to define the problem and possible solutions. In some rural areas girls are also dropping out, albeit at lower rates than boys, most likely due to early marriage.

Secular and religious school curricula. There is a concern that school curricula neither adequately prepare students for changing market conditions nor endow students with life skills. More young women are enrolling in post-secondary education, but that may not reflect the usefulness of the education since there is greater unemployment among women. Another trend is the development of religious schools that either supplement or substitute for a secular education. As a result, the GoKG is now requiring that religious schools include secular subjects in their curriculum. With an increasing number of youth in some areas choosing religious schools over state schools, it is critically important that the secular subjects offered include civic education. There is already a lack of uniformity in theological education since it is largely unregulated and teachers are educated in a variety of Muslim countries around the world. Thus, there is a risk that the students will not only have differing views about *Sharia* (Islamic law) and Islam, but also may fail to develop a solid understanding of Kyrgyz laws and governmental structures. The street law program seems to have had mixed success in providing secular education classes at the *madrasah* for boys and girls in Osh. While the program has provided useful materials, it is not clear whether the teachers have been using a common approach to the lessons. There is still a widely held concern that certain aspects of *Sharia* are not compatible with national law. But the understanding of *Sharia* varies greatly depending on where the individual studied.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

Family law and domestic violence. Despite laws protecting women’s rights, the implementation is weak. In particular, women need better awareness of their rights and representation in cases to enforce them,

especially family law, divorce, land/inheritance rights, and protection from domestic violence. Kyrgyzstan has only a few functioning shelters and a relatively weak network of crisis centers that offer hotline, counseling, and referral services. There is no national crisis hotline; rather, each crisis center has its own phone number that does not operate on a hotline (24-hour) basis and changes often depending on funding. Although the law provides for orders of protection from abusive spouses, few have been issued. Those interviewed indicated that many police and prosecutors (as well as the general public) still view domestic violence as a private family matter not to be handled by the authorities. Thus, there is still a need for training on domestic violence for community police/prosecutors/ judicial training

Bride kidnapping, early/forced marriage. Bride kidnapping and other forms of forced marriages have increased in Kyrgyzstan since independence and continue to be a persistent human rights violation in practice. Many point to the bad economy as one of the reasons for the increase in bride kidnapping as a way to avoid the expense of a traditional wedding. For young men, there is often pressure from friends and family to take a bride in this “traditional” way. However for young women, the fear of bride kidnapping results in severe restrictions on movement, impacting education and work. Among some of those interviewed who do not view the problem as particularly serious, the issue of consent seems particularly relevant. Specifically, more precise language is needed in discussing the issue to distinguish between true elopement (i.e., where there is consent of both the bride and groom) which is legal and bride kidnapping (i.e., where there is no consent of the bride, regardless of whether she “knows” the groom before she is abducted and/or she agrees under duress to accept the marriage) which is a crime and usually involves rape. At least one successful community-based model has been developed by Russell Kleinbach, author of recent groundbreaking work on the impact of raising public awareness with the residents of one village. A key element in reform is educating communities that non-consensual kidnapping is actually not a Kyrgyz tradition.⁴⁶ Also, there is a need to create disincentives (through community pressure and law enforcement) and alternatives for youth and families who may not consider other options for courtship and marriage.

Unregistered marriages. Unregistered or informal marriages, although officially discouraged, are still occurring. It is not clear why the increase is occurring, though it is more common in rural than in urban areas. These marriages put women at risk, especially economically since they have no guarantee of financial support or legitimization of children. The Parliament is considering how best to deal with this issue. One of the options is putting additional pressure on the religious leaders who are sanctioning these unions in violation of state policy.

Trafficking in persons. The issue of trafficking in persons was not explored during this assessment, due to time constraints.

Implementation of gender policy. As noted in the EG section above, there is inadequate capacity for gender analysis within the legislative/judicial Ministry of Justice (MOJ) branches. Gender activists have complained about the lack of transparency in legislative processes, especially budgeting, where there is a specific need for gender budgeting expertise to fulfill commitments of gender equity embodied in CEDAW and Kyrgyz law.

Women’s political participation. Although the gender quota has resulted in women elected to Parliament and appointed to some government posts, there is still a lack of women in political leadership at the local level. Additionally, some of the more secular women’s rights groups expressed the desire to find ways to work with religious women’s groups to increase women’s activism even in more

⁴⁶ Recent ethnographic and historical research discredits the widely held belief that non-consensual bride kidnapping was a common and accepted Kyrgyz tradition in pre-Soviet times. See Kleinbach, Russ and Salimjanova, Lilly (2007). "Kyz ala kachuu and adat: non-consensual bride kidnapping and tradition in Kyrgyzstan", *Central Asian Survey*, 26:2, 217 -233.

conservative communities. They recognize that it might be difficult to overcome differences but it would be useful if common issues could be promoted.

Legal aid/clinics. There is an ongoing need for low cost or free legal assistance in terms of legal information and representation in court. Women often have difficulty enforcing their inheritance rights and their family law rights in divorce. Furthermore, the domestic violence and trafficking shelter clients are in need of legal advice as well. Men, especially those who are indigent, also are in need of legal services.

Gender and the media. Women comprise the majority of journalists in Kyrgyzstan, yet they rarely address gender issues in their work, except in the traditional approach of women's issues. Even when Internews offered grants with gender as one of the themes, only one of 19 proposals was on gender, and it came from Osh. The program was quite successful: a talk show on women's rights and men's rights that turned out to be rather popular with callers asking questions on a variety of gender topics. There is a potential opportunity for radio programming in the near future as a result of the digital conversion of TV and radio. The concept of community radio is not well-developed in Kyrgyzstan, but there were two attempts to start a new radio station. The European Community-funded effort actually succeeded in getting licensed and allocated a frequency, but never started up. There already is a network of seven commercial regional radio stations that have full coverage of the country; community programming such as the gender call-in show with an expert panel could be piloted on these stations to test the interest among the listening audience.

New Generation of Civil Society Leaders. Despite years of support activities, the institutional capacity of NGOs still remains weak. In many cases, successful NGOs rely on one strong (usually) woman leader and lack a plan of succession for a new wave of leaders.

Multi-level conflict risks. Conflict analysis in the region should be broad enough to focus not only on religious conflicts, but also those that are interethnic (including between ethnic Kyrgyz and minorities settled or deported to the region in Soviet times), socio-economic, urban/rural, etc. Conflict prevention should focus on promoting non-violent dispute resolution tools and techniques that can be applied to a variety of situations within communities.

D. Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Target **entrepreneurship and income generation projects** to areas most heavily impacted by unemployment and migration.
- Work with GoKG to find ways to respond more effectively to **internal migration**, especially easing *propiska* restrictions that create barriers for mobile job seekers, and provide support to ensure that accompanying families have access to the social protections for which they are eligible (education, healthcare, labor protection, etc.).
- Explore options for creating more **open markets for local produce**, e.g., from backyard farms where pricing would be market based and not mafia controlled.
- Continue to promote **microfinance** in underserved regions, and encourage successful women entrepreneurs to “graduate” to SME lending to grow their businesses.
- Continue developing **water user associations** using gender equitable approaches that involve both women and men and respond to community needs. Consider how to expand association activity beyond agricultural usage to include household water issues.

- Work with SME advocacy groups to seek a more equitable **tax payment scheme for SMEs**. Conduct a gender analysis of the business environment to confirm gender differences in the impact of the current patent/license scheme.
- Collect sex-disaggregated information for survey takers and those who provided service to them as part of **trade/customs customer satisfaction surveys**.
- Develop an appropriate test mechanism (e.g., a four season sampling of a selected number of shuttle traders at different border crossings) to see whether the **bulk weight customs fee** system is actually less costly to shuttle traders than *ad valorem* fees. Encourage adjustment of the bulk weight fees if necessary.
- If possible, support the provision of **gender budgeting** training and technical assistance to parliamentarians and other government officials responsible for budgeting. Ensure that whatever technical assistance is provided by USAID-funded activities on budgeting includes gender budgeting.
- Provide gender and economics policy analysis on **pension reform** to interested policymakers and be sure to include gender expertise in any other economic policy assistance as well.

Health and Education

- Support awareness raising campaign about **rights to health and education services** for all Kyrgyz citizens and whatever rights are also available to non-citizen residents. Include administrative barriers as an area covered by legal rights activities.
- Continue to support incentives for **PHC doctors and specialists in rural areas**. Work with the MOH, health promotion NGOs, and ethnic community groups to raise awareness among mixed marriage populations (especially Uzbek women and men) about the need to register for Kyrgyz health services.
- Support efforts to continue **healthy lifestyle education** (including healthy relationships and sex education) in the schools for both boys and girls. Assist with linking pre-marriage counseling programs to accurate medical evidence-based information.
- Continue work on reducing **maternal and infant mortality** and include men as partners in these efforts. Seek ways to address the reproductive health needs of both women and men through STI prevention and treatment as well as overcoming the deficit in urologists and andrologists at health clinics.
- Investigate further the issue of local “public women” who may require special outreach efforts as a **MARP**. Develop targeted outreach based on the particular vulnerabilities of men and women returning migrants, ex-prisoners, and sex-workers.
- Work with Ministry of Education to seek solutions to current and impending **teacher shortage**, including encouraging the recruitment of both male and female teachers.
- Conduct research on reasons for an increase in male **school dropouts** at the secondary level.
- Continue to offer **street law and basic legal education** materials and training to interested communities, including religious schools. Ensure that curriculum includes Kyrgyz laws on gender equality and women’s rights as human rights.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Support **crisis centers** and development of additional **shelter services**.
- Support the establishment of a **national crisis hotline** with trained and experienced staff who are able to provide counseling and referrals for additional services.
- Include a domestic violence module in any **community police, prosecutor, and judicial training** with a goal of increasing gender sensitivity and promoting a coordinated community response to domestic violence (referral network involving police, prosecution, and health, mental health, legal, and other support services).

- Work with human rights groups (including women’s rights groups) and law enforcement (through INL) to promote better understanding among both men and women of the distinction between consensual elopement and **bride kidnapping** and enforcement of laws against bride kidnapping.
- Consider supporting programming to pilot successful community-based models to prevent **bride kidnapping** in areas with high rates of the crime.
- Support legal rights advocacy groups as they work with policymakers and religious leaders to reduce the incidence of **unregistered marriages**.
- Support advocacy and training programs to increase **women’s political participation** at the local level. Seek opportunities to bring together more secular women’s rights groups with religious women’s groups over common issues and concerns.
- Continue support for **legal aid/clinics for the indigent** and other vulnerable populations, such as women in inheritance and family law disputes, and victims of violence.
- Continue efforts to support gender programming through **media activities**, and look for opportunities to promote community radio programming that would include gender topics as part of its themes.
- Target **NGO support activities** to those successful NGOs that are interested in developing the next generation of leaders (men and women) and adjust their
- organization to a more mission-driven agenda (rather than the strong leader-driven agenda).

Box 2: Chronology of Post-Independence Gender Policy in Tajikistan

Article 17 guarantees equality before the law for men and women, stating “All are equal before the law and the courts. The state guarantees the rights and freedoms of every person regardless of nationality, race, sex, language, religious beliefs, political persuasion, social status, knowledge and property. Men and women have the same rights.”

| | |
|------|---|
| 1993 | Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). |
| 1995 | Women in Development Bureau established |
| 1998 | National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan, 1998-2005 |
| 1999 | Presidential Decree issued in support of the National Action Plan |
| 2000 | Convention against Transnational Crime and its Protocols |
| 2001 | Committee on Women and Family Affairs (CWFA) founded |
| 2002 | Law on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights |
| 2003 | Adoption of an amendment concerning “Access of Rural Women to Land” in line with UNIFEM study |
| 2005 | Adoption of Gender Equality Law |

VIII. Tajikistan Gender Assessment⁴⁷

A. Gender Trends and Conditions

Tajikistan has been and remains the poorest of the Central Asian Republics. Only one-tenth of its land is arable and, unlike Kazakhstan, no significant petroleum or mineral wealth has yet been discovered. Years of civil war as well as several natural disasters following independence further injured the economy. Lack of employment opportunities at home has led to the formation of a large population of migrant laborers, mostly men, who seek work primarily in Russia. The population of Tajikistan is now largely dependent on remittances from this migrant labor and while this has reduced poverty levels significantly over the past ten years, the outmigration is creating other negative consequences. It has “feminized” agricultural

⁴⁷ This chapter was prepared by Deborah Rubin with Shahrigul Amirjanova.

production, with women providing agricultural labor but lacking the education, access to productive resources, and technical training to transform the agricultural economy. There are also recurring conditions of hunger and food insecurity.

The growing absence of men has meant that some women are taking on new responsibilities. But their progress is constrained, especially yet not only in rural communities, by relatively rigid notions of men's and women's appropriate roles in society. Many believe men should be the key breadwinners and women should maintain the home and care for the children and the elderly, limiting women's opportunities to work outside the home. Education for girls and women is increasingly discouraged, making them even less prepared to enter the economy.

In short, women in Tajikistan have borne the brunt of the impacts of the transition period. Women's workload has intensified because of the increasing need to contribute to the cash income of the family, supplement family food needs with produce from a garden plot, and care for children and the sick while health and other social services have deteriorated. All of this has occurred with an unequal division of labor for household tasks between men and women. Even as income poverty rates start to fall, social indicators for women continue to deteriorate: e.g., more girls are failing to complete nine years of education and poor nutrition and stress are negatively influencing maternal health⁴⁸

These economic and social struggles are taking place in a political environment in which women are also increasingly marginalized and their interests not always well-represented.

Historical Gender Legacy. Tajikistan at the end of Soviet rule had achieved good indicators of human development despite a lower GDP than other countries in the region. Gender disparities in education, literacy, and life expectancy were small as the country benefited greatly from the social services provided under the Soviet system. Quotas for women ensured that they held positions in the national and regional governments. In 1986, women held 26% of government administrative jobs, primarily in the social and cultural domains. Independence, however, brought huge economic shocks and civil disruption. While the consequences have been extremely difficult for all of the nation's citizens, the loss of social services and the economic shifts have had different gendered impacts.

Gender Policy. The constitution of Tajikistan provides for gender equality before the law but implementation and enforcement is weak. The approach, notwithstanding the language used, is to improve "women's status rather than actually addressing gender inequalities in all spheres of life."⁴⁹ As in Kazakhstan, the constitution does not provide a definition of discrimination. There is a definition in the Gender Equality Law passed in 2005, but it is still difficult to bring cases to the courts to challenge inequitable conditions in the workplace. Several international donors have been very supportive of efforts to develop and to advocate for gender equality policies. There is a donor group, chaired by UNDP and UNIFEM, that meets regularly and reviews gender issues.⁵⁰ The Swiss foreign assistance program and the Soros Foundation and Open Society Institute have been particularly supportive of addressing gender disparities in education and the consequences of gender-based violence.

The Committee on Women and Family Affairs (CWFA), founded in 2001, has the responsibility for managing Tajikistan's State Program on gender. The CWFA is led by a board which is usually chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The former chair, Khairnisso Mavolonova, is currently a candidate for election to Parliament. As a result, she resigned her position with CWFA. Ministerial representatives and key NGO representatives are permanent members on the Board.

⁴⁸ ADB 2006:2.

⁴⁹ ADB 2006: 29

⁵⁰ A USAID staff member has occasionally been attending these meetings, but it is not a formal part of her job description.

The State Program lays out the following roadmap:

- identifying long-term government policy for providing equal rights and opportunities for the men and women of Tajikistan;
- raising among all men and women awareness of actual gender relations and their importance to the development of Tajikistan, including public administrators at all levels; and,
- establishing and developing a system of socioeconomic, political, organizational, and legal conditions to enable women to contribute to the development of society as a whole.⁵¹

Although the CWFA receives some funds from the national government, as well as local and regional budgets, it has limited capacity in terms of both finances and personnel to manage the implementation of the State Program or to provide needed gender analysis of critical issues in policy and programming. Women's committees have been established at *oblast*, *hukumat*, and community levels with an expectation that they will carry out aspects of the State Program. However, their resources are even more limited.

In summary, although there is an excellent structure in place to promote gender equality in both Tajik policy and programming, movement on important legislation is stalled, notably draft laws to further institutionalize gender equality and to address the widespread and probably growing problem of domestic violence. Implementation of existing laws is weak. In several areas, especially related to domestic violence and the trafficking of persons, existing laws are not harmonized. Finally, social beliefs uphold dominance of men at home and in the workplace in ways that limit girls' and women's opportunities to function as citizens with full rights in Tajik society.

Table 1: Proportion of Elected and Administrative Positions Held by Women

| Position | Proportion of Women |
|---|-----------------------|
| Majlisi Namoyandagon (national level) | 18% (2005 election) |
| Majlisi Milli (oblast level) | 12.1% (2002 election) |
| Local Majlisis | 11.5% (2002 election) |
| Managers in Administration in General | 15.5% |
| Managers of: | |
| Ministries and State Committees | 7.3 |
| President's Office | 12.3% |
| Presidential Bodies and Government | 10.6% |
| Heads of Agencies | 20.5% |
| Representation in Local Government: | |
| Heads of Cities or Rayons | 9% (7 women) |
| Deputy Chair of City or Rayon | 34% |
| Heads of Jamoats (Village-Level Government) | 22.7% (93 women) |
| Deputy Chair of Jamoat | 43% |
| Judges in All Courts | 20.8%* |
| Heads of Prosecutor's Office Departments | 45% |

Majlisi Milli = National Assembly; Majlis Namoyandagon = Assembly of Representatives.
Source: UNIFEM 2005, and GRT and UNDP 2003b.

⁵¹ ADB 2006: 29

Gender and Politics. Tajikistan is governed under a Parliamentary system with two houses, led by the President, currently Emomali Rahmon. There are two houses: the National Assembly (*Majlisi Milli*) with 33 seats and the Assembly of Representatives (*Majlisi Namoyandagon*) with 63 seats. After quotas were ended at independence, women were able to claim only 3.6% (9 of 230) of the seats. This figure has been increasing (see Table below, taken from ADB 2006: 87). Women have a higher percentage of representatives in local and regional government positions (Table 1).

There have been in the past ten years times when a few women headed important government committees or held high positions in government, including the office of Deputy Prime Minister, but there is concern within the NGO community that while having more individual women in highly visible positions is positive, it does not necessarily imply that these women will support gender equality positions, nor does their appointment reflect greater desire by the government to push gender equitable policies. For example, there is legislation on domestic violence that has been stalled in the Parliament for over five years.

Demographic Situation. The overshadowing issue in Tajik demographics is labor migration. Although official figures estimate that the numbers are perhaps half a million people, the International Organization of Migration reports that upwards of 800,000 people, the large majority of whom are men, migrate out of Tajikistan in search of employment, with over 95% traveling to Russia. The remittances they send back fund over half of the Tajik national economy, according to data from the International Monetary Fund.⁵² Nearly half of the population is below the age of 30 and three-quarters of the population are married with several children. Fewer than 6% travel with their families and over half do not have a regularized residence status in the destination country. Notwithstanding their important contribution to the national economy, the migrants who return, whether seasonally or permanently, also contribute to the increase of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in Tajikistan. Those who do not return create an underclass of abandoned wives who are left to care for children on limited resources (see below).

Polygyny, a form of polygamy where a man takes more than one wife, is emerging as a growing problem in Tajikistan. Although legally prohibited, it is seen as a reasonable response to the outmigration of men to work in Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. Women are expected to marry, and with fewer eligible men, especially in rural areas, “[M]arriage, even as a second wife, offers more safety and financial stability than a woman can achieve on her own due to the revival of traditional gender roles and high unemployment”⁵³. Because the practice is illegal, it is difficult to document the scope of the problem.

B. Conceptual Issues about Gender

It was reported that in Tajikistan people do not like to use the word “gender” (which is translated using the Russian word for gender), as they feel it is a foreign concept. When probed, those few who said “there are no gender issues in Tajikistan” explained that they were referring to the lack of inequality in the law.⁵⁴ When asked, however, about the implementation of the law or about differences in opportunities for men and women, people were quick to point out a long list of gender disparities in economic options, education, and career paths. They particularly pointed to the rigid stereotypes about appropriate behaviors for men and women that lock men into assuming a dominant role in marriage, a role of breadwinner which pushes them into labor migration. Stereotypes protect men’s authority within the family and provide an excuse for physical and emotional abuse of women. Ideas about women reinforce a narrow picture of women as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law, whose duties should revolve around house and family. While there are of course many in Tajikistan who may live the lives described by these stereotypes, there are also many who do not. As discussed elsewhere in the report, women work in the

⁵² IOM 2009.

⁵³ Spindler 2009: 7.

⁵⁴ The expression “there are no gender issues” was heard only a few times, in contrast with Kazakhstan, where it was a common statement.

market and some travel as shuttle traders to neighboring countries for items to trade; some women entrepreneurs have been very successful; women are a still small but increasing part of local and regional governments, and they have a visible place in the national government. As discussed below with respect to the increase in men's and women's labor migration, new opportunities are emerging and in some locales economic pressures are pushing men and women into new roles. Nonetheless, the weight of the stereotypes does place social boundaries on both women's and men's willingness to change and it is not clear that these shifts will be institutionalized over the longer term.

Those working in development in Tajikistan should be wary of embracing these stereotypes too tightly. It is important that development interventions work to provide a range of opportunities for both men and women which question the assumptions about men's and women's abilities. For example, activities for women do not always need to be an extension of their roles as wives and mothers; activities for men can start to address the negative consequences of some privileged masculine behaviors, such as unhealthy lifestyles. Activities might also address sharing of responsibilities within the household or discrimination or harassment of women in the workplace.

C. Sectoral Findings, Risks, and Opportunities

Economic Growth

Related both to the condition of labor migration already discussed and social attitudes, there is severe sex-segmentation in the labor force, with women working in the lower-paid sectors of agriculture, education, and health care. Young women comprise only 7% of students studying agriculture. The lack of women in fields of agricultural study, as well as in other technical fields, reverberates throughout the national economy. With so many men migrating out of the country to look for work, including those with technical skills, these gendered occupational choices translate into a lack of human capital in some of the most critically important areas to the Tajik economy, such as agriculture and agribusiness.

There is also an overall decreasing level of involvement of women in the formal labor force. In 2003, 70% of all adult men and 45% of all adult women were in the workforce (Asian Development Bank [ADB]); in 2008, the figures had shifted to 58% of men to 31% of women (The Living Standards Survey). There is also a wage gap between men and women.

Surprisingly, there is also a decreasing number of women receiving microcredit from the formerly USAID-supported MicroInvest program although women's need for credit remains high. Without further study, it is not clear whether the lower amount of women receiving microcredit is a consequence of a change in lending practices or other factors.

Women's involvement in agriculture is extensive but they participate largely as workers rather than as managers. Despite reform in the land laws and rules about the formation of individual or family (*dekhan*) farms that were a product of the breakup of the Soviet collective farms, women remain only a small minority of *dekhan* farm owners and managers. Women have not understood the changes in these laws and are not aware of their rights. Because of their lack of agricultural and business skills, they are not well-prepared to build the agricultural sector. This is an area of huge opportunity for USAID economic growth programming.

The team identified two excellent efforts to address gender issues in practice in USAID funded activities related to agriculture. In the first situation, Mercy Corps has been implementing a Development Assistance Program (DAP) to reduce food insecurity and vulnerability in Tajikistan under a USAID Office of Food for Peace institutional capacity-building grant in Rasht District since 2005. The program not only distributed food but also provided weekly educational meetings on nutrition, sanitation, and rural

development topics taught by local people, some of whom were women, to local residents, many of whom were women. Alert M&E staff at Mercy Corps recognized that during their visits to Rasht over the life of the project, and specifically when conducting a final evaluation in June 2009, the women spoke about their heightened enjoyment of greater freedoms as a result of the project. The team came to call these changes the “unintended impacts” of the way the project was structured and the content of its programs. Mercy Corps decided to conduct a small study to further investigate these impacts and found that the weekly sessions had “nurtured women’s social ties among each other; gave women more freedom to leave the home; provided women their only access to education; and garnered women more influence on decision-making and respect within the family and community.”⁵⁵ The lessons learned in this work would be usefully applied to Mercy Corps’s recently awarded Tajikistan Stabilization Project to work with at risk communities.

In the second situation, Winrock’s Water Users’ Association Support Program has the objective of forming Water Users’ Associations (WUA) in a sustainable manner and providing capacity-building to the local WUA members. In the process of working with the communities, the project team came across a number of enthusiastic women members who wanted to apply the knowledge they were gaining from the WUA activities to build up local enterprises and to provide additional training to their members. The project team recognized this interest and found an opportunity to build into their project activities additional attention to the interests of women members and wives of men members. As part of this programming, the team invited horticultural experts to speak with members about growing crops for food security and for the market. The experts also provided information about local processing and preservation methods for horticultural products, including drying, canning, and pickling (see photo). The sessions have been very successful and have reached “hundreds of women,” some of whom have gone on to establish small enterprises as a result, including a baking business that now caters local weddings and other celebrations and another that sells dried fruit and preserved vegetables.

The two cases represent two different approaches: in the first case, organizers captured positive “unintended impacts” of project activities; in the second case, the team built “intended impacts” into an activity not thought to address women’s economic and social empowerment and relied on household dynamics to change behaviors among both men and women. Fortunately, in these projects attentive project staff saw opportunities and seized them. How much more successful in achieving both equity and economic goals could these and other projects be if project design incorporated better sex-disaggregated baseline data on key indicators and more careful monitoring of the gender impacts of projects? The mission can learn from both of these programs to write into new Requests for Proposals requirements for projects to i) establish baselines, ii) monitor more closely the gender impacts of their activities, and iii) deliberately develop activities to address the gender disparities they find.

Health and Education

Projects are beginning to look at how different social relationships can either encourage or discourage specific health behaviors. For example, in the course of implementing the “I Know” project, the partners adopted their strategies to include mothers-in-law in the groups to which they provided information about contraceptives, recognizing that young wives needed to have the support of their in-laws to travel to physicians and pharmacies. This experience will be transferred to the new Health Outreach Project (HOP) in its work with six different vulnerable populations to address, among its other objectives, stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and TB infections. Attention to gender was not an explicit part of the project staff’s job descriptions under the new HOP and they do not have a dedicated team member to look at gender integration, although the staff of the Population Services International (PSI) component does have team members with some gender experience.

⁵⁵ Spindler 2009.

The situation that Tajikistan faces in education is serious. Not only is there the issue of its generally poor quality educational system, but it has the largest gender gap in educational attainment in the region and, although statistics are not certain, it appears to be growing. While there was near gender parity in primary school in 1990, by 2000 it was at 0.89, with a rise by 2006 to 0.96. The figures for secondary school were 0.87 in 2000 and 0.86 in 2006. In higher education, the level in 1990 was only 0.62, but by 2000 it had decreased to 0.31. Currently, the World Bank considers Tajikistan “very unlikely” to reach gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015.⁵⁶ In 2003/4, young women were only 25% of higher education students. In addition, there are severe sex-segmented patterns of educational choices of study, with few women entering technical fields of study and many women remaining in fields more commonly associated with women’s domains, such as education, medicine, and social services. These fields are also lower paid and have fewer avenues for advancement. Even young women enrolled in business and information technology courses, judging by a small sample of university students with whom the team spoke, see themselves as heading towards positions of leadership and several spoke of being happy to get any job once they graduate, whether or not it is related to their studies. While this may be realistic in the current economic situation, it is also a poor use of resources at the national level.

Girls’ school attendance in secondary school (after age 14-15) correlates with mother’s education level and income, emphasizing the need to include mothers and mothers-in-law in educational programming at the community level.

Low educational levels are also linked dynamically to the problem of early marriage. Twelve percent of girls between 15 and 19 years of age were already married, divorced, or widowed⁵⁷ despite a legal age of seventeen for marriage. Fifteen percent of girls are married by age 18. There are few jobs for girls who continue their education. Moreover, there is a cost to the family to keep them in school. Perceiving no economic benefit, families take girls out of school and encourage them to marry early. Once married, women begin to have children. Opportunities to get additional schooling are extremely limited.

Although enrollment figures favor boys, there are problems for boys’ education as well. Economic pressure forces poorer families to pull boys out of school and put them to work, so their dropout rates are also rising and poverty becomes an intergenerational phenomenon. Higher education for boys is an avenue to avoid military service.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

As noted earlier, the political leadership is dominated by men. After the last election, there were 11 women elected into the *majlisi namoyandagon* (lower chamber) out of a possible 63 and 4 women members in the *majlisi milli* (upper chamber) out of a possible 34. Parliament members are not accountable to their constituents on women’s priorities and gender equality, as reflected by lack of progress on the draft laws related to domestic violence, equal rights, and equal opportunity.

As in other parts of Central Asia, the NGO community is dominated by women who have successfully provided the social services abandoned by the state during the years of civil strife and economic trouble. They have been somewhat less successful in mobilizing resources to advance women’s economic empowerment and political leadership.

The Democracy program has also supported exchange programs at USAID and the US Embassy. It was reported to the team that men and women perform differently on the tests and in the interviews, with women generally showing higher performance on tests and papers but men performing better in interview

⁵⁶ The category of “very unlikely” is based on a pattern from 1990 to the most recent figure that “shows that gender parity is either decreasing or not increasing fast enough” (World Bank Gender Statistics).

⁵⁷ UN 2004

situations. Program selection criteria used test results to make the first cut, with the result that women often outnumbered men in the pool. Their less skilled performance in interviews, however, worked against them in the final selection. In an activity with the goal of providing access to the internet, organizers did not collect sex-disaggregated information on internet use and instead categorized users by profession (students, workers, etc.). As a result, it is not possible to determine whether there are gender differences in access.

Another area of work has been to support training of journalists to report on issues related to women and to challenge gender stereotypes. Projects have understood this charge to mean that they should report on obstacles faced by women or achievements made by women. For example, under the program, a film was made on women's experiences of abuse within families resulting in suicides by hanging, overdose, or self-immolation. Prevalence figures are not known, but some interviewees said that newspaper reports present this as an increasing problem. Another film addressed women's economic empowerment and presented the case of a woman who became successful and ended up employing her husband. Although the number of women journalists is increasing, this also coincides with a period of increased media scrutiny by the government; it is not clear if this trend is leading towards a more critical journalistic stance. Sex-segmentation is common; women do not typically work in production and camera work. USAID can provide guidance to these projects to clarify that the prescription to "address gender stereotypes" or "to include programming on gender" should not only focus on women, but also tackle problems and/or achievements of and by men to overcome gender-based stereotypes, e.g., about alcoholism, risky health behaviors, violence, or depression, among other economic and social issues.

Other Issues

Gender-based violence. While accurate national-level statistics on gender-based violence are not available, there are some assessments that have suggested the problem is wide-spread and growing.

- Nearly 75% of women believe that the husband has a right to abuse them under certain circumstances;
- Polygamy, though illegal, is practiced in various forms and second or third wives have no legal rights to property or protection;
- Definitions of gender-based violence vary (physical and/or verbal and emotional abuse; assault by intimate partners and/or strangers);
- Several NGOs have small studies on specific /local populations; and
- Estimates are that over 80% of women report having experienced sexual, physical, and/or domestic violence.

Men also experience gender-based violence in Tajikistan but no well-documented numbers are available and little work has been done to describe and analyze it. Forced labor migration can be a type of GBV experienced by men, both for its coercion and its exploitation of the gender role of men as primary earners in the family. Some informants working on migration issues also noted an emergence of trafficking in young men and boys for sex but no studies or documentation have been found that could confirm the scope of this problem. One informant noted that "men's suicides are increasing" in northern Tajikistan because of difficulties adjusting to being unemployed after returning from foreign labor migration. Others commented on the need for repatriation services for these men. Gender-based violence against men also occurs in prisons, where men are forced into sexual and social relationships based on gender stereotypes.

By best estimates, there are currently twelve crisis centers and eleven Women's Resource Centers which offer assistance, primarily to women but sometimes to their children as well.⁵⁸ The centers have joined together to form an association. There are hotlines to provide information and awareness raising sessions to inform women of their rights and to inform both men and women about the problems of domestic violence. There are three main centers: "Bovary" in Dushanbe, "Ghamkhori" in Khurgan-tube (Khatlon), and "Gulrukhsor" in Khujand.

The "Gulrukhsor" center in Khujand serves as both a crisis center and a shelter. It was founded in 1996 and was the first crisis center in the country. It also appears to be the only one to provide both short and longer-term (up to 14 days, three times per year) residence options for adult women. It also offers 24 hour hotline services and consultations with psychologists and lawyers. The shelter started in 2005, and has provided temporary housing to 125 women, 15 teenagers and 106 children since it opened in April of that year. It was supported by the US from 2005-8 but it is not currently receiving USAID or US Embassy support. Early in 2010, it moved into a refurbished building funded by Finland and supported by the OSCE.⁵⁹

Some programs, such as the NGO "Najoti Kudakor" in Khulyob, support mobile units that travel to communities to provide information through community theatre and other avenues that communicate to men and women, boys and girls. NGOs and clinics provide first aid and counseling but shelter space for survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, or other types of gender-based violence are few and all are poorly funded, understaffed, and often in facilities lacking a regular supply of electricity or other utilities.

Gender consequences of labor migration. As noted in the section on demographic issues, labor migration is both a boon and a curse to the Tajik economy. There are estimates that anywhere from 500,000 to up to 1 million people migrate in search of work annually to countries outside of Tajikistan, primarily Russia and other former Soviet Union locations. Internal migration is also thought to be high but no numbers are available. The majority of migrants are men but estimates for 2008 revealed a growing number of women (possibly from 5-10%). Interviews with those working in the field suggest this is increasing, including women who move with their families. A study sponsored by IOM⁶⁰ estimates that from 231,000 to 289,000 households of families left behind are considered economically abandoned and are living in poverty.

There are many gendered consequences of labor migration. Women whose husbands migrate are left without adequate resources to maintain their families. They may live with the in-laws and work for them because it is less expensive than maintaining their own homes but their situations are not secure. If economic problems arise, some women are forced out of their in-laws' homes. The remittances sent back are generally controlled by the migrants' parents and not their wives. Second and third wives who did not marry legally face particularly tenuous situations and can be forced out of the home by their in-laws or the first (official) wife and they have no legal recourse to property.

Men who migrate for work often face difficult working conditions. They are at greater risk of exposure to infectious diseases, such as TB and STDs including HIV/AIDS because of crowded and inadequate living conditions and their involvement with infected sexual partners. Separated from their families, some men cohabit with other women and begin second families. Returning men migrants face risks of depression and loss of confidence when they are unable to find work and support their families. Interviewees recommended providing counseling programs aimed at returned men migrants to help them cope with both physical and mental health issues, as well as employment assistance.

⁵⁸ Different sources site different numbers and different types of shelters. Funding ups and downs force closures, reductions in services available and/or staff.

⁵⁹ See <http://www.osce.org/item/42691.html>

⁶⁰ Spindler 2009

D. Recommendations by Sector

Economic Growth

- Support women entrepreneurs in expanding from small enterprises into medium and large businesses by supporting business management programs, more avenues for accessing credit, and addressing discriminatory legislation.
- [EG, HE or DM] Two projects, the “good practices” of the Mercy Corps DAP study on women’s empowerment and the work of Winrock’s Water User Association Support Project, have both identified ways to address gender issues by finding avenues for empowering women within their programming. These efforts to promote women’s networking and mobility and to obtain training and education outside the home have wider relevance than the EG sector in which they are currently positioned.
- Develop activities (within rural development activity or land tenure program) to inform women on *dekhan* farms of their rights; to encourage women’s greater involvement in *dekhan* farm management; to help women or women’s groups to gain their own land; to provide technical training on specific agricultural techniques; to bring women into the building of new agricultural value chains, and to include women throughout the value chains rather than only in positions as agricultural workers in the fields and factories. Ensure that legal aid from the land tenure project is accessible to women.
- Develop and support a new program to encourage more women to enter into studies of agricultural science and agribusiness; a model is the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) program supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for African women scientists. In Tajikistan, it should start targeting young women finishing high school and in college as well as the population of existing women agricultural scientists although it is extremely small.
- Link economic growth and education programs in supporting women’s entry into professional and scientific education programs.
- Support women’s entry into agricultural sciences and related businesses as part of existing programming in agriculture and rural development.
- Support gender training programs for business associations to encourage flexible work hours (reducing conflict with domestic responsibilities) and to change attitudes about women workers and entrepreneurs.
- Study situation of microcredit to understand shift in client profiles from women to men.
- Support women in new business arenas (small industry, small infrastructure, and energy promotion with growth potential in addition to expanding kitchen gardens and home economics).

Health and Education

- Continue to support investments in basic health and sanitation infrastructure such as the project to provide access to clean water. Recent analyses by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)⁶¹ show that such investments provide significant health and economic benefits by reducing the time and energy spent in collecting water by women and children that can be put to other uses. It will be critical for the Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project to establish a baseline of time allocation and to track time use at the midterm and end of the project to demonstrate how time saved in water collection was used.

⁶¹ Msangi 2010

- Support programs to encourage improved access for men and for women to health services, developing gender-differentiated models.
- Encourage additional research into other gender-differentiated health issues, e.g., studies that investigate the social effects of stigma associated with disease on marriageability and employment and how that may differ for men or women.
- Improve the continuity of healthcare (particularly for TB) among migrant male populations.
- Initiate specific programming to work with parents and religious leaders to encourage school attendance.
- [EG and HE] Provide support to young women in secondary and higher education to keep them in school, perhaps through a mentoring program similar to the National Science Foundation’s “Women in Science and Engineering” (WISE), which provides funding for current students and faculty to establish mentor relationships, to tutor students, and to offer career advice.
- Expand the participation of women in vocational education activities.
- [DM and HE] Make better links to local NGOs working on gender and education issues, including gender-based violence.
- Work on programs to keep teachers in school and to encourage the training and retention of women teachers.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Support international exchange programs for women leaders and also work with men currently in government to expand their understanding of gender equality.
- Support national exposure for women involved in local government.
- Continue programs on capacity building for local *jamoats* and *oblast* authorities.
- Increase ability of TIP activities to counter the labor trafficking of men.
- Respondents suggested that Parliamentarians needed to have a better understanding of gender issues, especially on gender and trade, economic activities, and GBV. They also requested that gender issues are integrated into curricular materials for any future Parliamentarian training programs.⁶²
- Support the use of woman-owned businesses and a combination of men and women in the crews of community development and local government infrastructure projects.
- Make better links to local NGOs working on gender and education issues, including gender-based violence.
- Develop guidelines for projects working with the media to include attention to issues facing men in their work addressing gender stereotypes.

Recommendations on Other Issues

Gender-based violence

- Expand support to women’s and children’s crisis centers; they now suffer from underfunding and limited facilities with substandard lighting and other utilities.
- Coordinate with the US Embassy programs to increase support for NGOs working on crisis hotlines, domestic violence, rape counseling, shelters, and women in prisons.
- Provide financial support to NGOs so that they can better cover salaries for professionals (doctors, psychologists, and lawyers) and do not have to depend on volunteers.

⁶² Until more resources are made available, USAID’s support on this topic could be handled through its representation on the UN-coordinated Gender Thematic Group. Both UNIFEM and OSCE who are participants in that group has been working with Parliamentarians and providing gender trainings that could benefit from USAID’s perspectives.

- Develop ways to link programming on gender-based violence prevention and services to the American Corners programs.
- Support advocacy on passage of domestic violence law.
- Support gender education to change attitudes towards gender-based violence among both men and women.
- Develop activities (within current programs where possible) to work with men on prevention of domestic violence.

Gender Consequences of Labor Migration

- Support efforts by IOM and others to understand the scope of the problem of the “abandoned wives of labor migrants” and require baseline surveys in new projects to identify the scope of abandoned families in the rural areas in which they are working (Chemonics, ACIDI/VOCA, EMG).
- Support programs to assist labor migrants, both men and women, with information about their rights and access to medical care and psycho-social counseling to address the difficulties these families experience through separation and reuniting.
- Develop programs specifically for wives of migrants that can help them to find employment or to development their own income-generating activities. These efforts should also include community programs to change attitudes of in-laws and local community members about the benefits of women’s employment outside the home.
- Look into an assessment of internal migration levels as well, including in the informal sector.

E. Recommendations for the Tajikistan Country Office

Need for an integrated approach. USAID-sponsored partners are aware of the Agency requirement to report sex-disaggregated data on training participation. They are also quite well aware of the gender disparities and rigid gender stereotypes that are prevalent in the country. They are not as aware of what they might do within their programs to address these disparities or stereotypes. No programs have identified a position on their teams to specifically address gender issues. Nor were they asked to in their Request for Proposals or Requests for Applications. Without clear expertise, attention to redress of gender disparities will be piecemeal and although it will benefit individuals, long-term structural, attitudinal, or legislative shifts are unlikely. Some programs, such as the Water Users Association Support Project described above have made efforts to support women entrepreneurs and to provide skills to women in rural areas. While they are to be commended for their work, it is critically important for the mission to support a more integrated approach to building the technical, management, and financial resources of rural women to transform the agricultural sector and to begin to think beyond supporting activities that only extend women’s roles in the home and garden.

Baseline gender data. In particular, new programs in economic growth, including agriculture, should establish baselines on such issues as women’s access to key productive assets as well as clean drinking water, sanitation, and safe transportation. Only against a solid baseline will it be possible to determine if women are truly benefiting from USAID supported activities both absolutely and in comparison to men.

Internal focus: USAID/Tajikistan does not have a formal position description for a staff member to coordinate gender integration into its programs. One staff member on the Democracy and Conflict Mitigation team (who will soon be leaving the mission) has been handling these responsibilities out of her personal interest. The team recommends that mission leadership use the opportunity provided by the new strategy development and the turnover in the office to recruit someone with substantive skills in gender analysis and to give that person the formal authority to work with team members to broaden their understanding of gender issues and to integrate more effective strategies to address gender disparities into

their programs. Partners reported that they received very few Requests for Proposals and Applications which attended to gender beyond a perfunctory statement about collecting sex-disaggregated data on training participation. Even those proposals which claimed to “integrate gender” generally failed to explain what that might entail.

In one case, a project led by Chemonics addressing land tenure was already partnering with a group with a good background in gender and land issues. But the Chemonics team was not building on that strength and instead had their partner working on a different issue. If gender issues were more clearly integrated into the project design, more links could be made with the groups in Tajikistan who have local knowledge on these issues in ways that could more directly benefit project objectives.

External focus: USAID could also learn from other donors and members of the NGO community who have been actively supporting gender-related work since the early 1990s. A start would be to send a formal representative to the Gender Theme Group which is a forum of international agencies led by UNIFEM that develops plans and strategies and disseminates information among donors and partners.

Another recommendation is to invite groups working on gender issues to present on their work to USAID and US Embassy staff. In several instances, the team learned of initiatives that paralleled efforts USAID was working on that might be enriched by bringing in local partners with gender expertise. In the course of the field visit, for example, the team provided UNIFEM-sponsored reports on gender and land tenure and gender and agriculture in Tajikistan to the team starting the new EMG rural development project.

There exists sufficient gender expertise in Tajikistan for the mission to develop a roster of groups and individual consultants by sector to provide guidance to USAID partners. These groups will need to learn how to work with USAID because the project approach as well as USAID’s approach to gender is different from that of many other donors working in the region.

IX. Turkmenistan Gender Assessment⁶³

A. Gender Trends and Conditions

Historical Gender Legacy. Both men and women in Turkmenistan have generally maintained high rates of literacy, education, and economic activity since independence. In the labor market, many categories of work were and continue to be dominated by either women or men. Men tended to dominate in government jobs because they had so many benefits, such as access to good apartments, kindergartens, etc. for their families. Under the Soviet system, working women received generous maternity leave (3 years) and many protective restrictions on working hours and conditions based on their status of being a mother. They also were expected to maintain their traditional role as keeper of the home and family. After independence, many women became involved in shuttle trading to earn income. The period during the first presidency (Niyazov) after independence was marked by major changes in education and health standards. For example, certain subjects were completely removed from the school curriculum, compulsory education was reduced, and university was shortened from between five and six years to only two years. Certain health issues were largely ignored and statistics were generally unavailable or unreliable regarding health indicators. The educational system and certain health indicators have improved with President Berdimuhamedov. See Demographic Situation below.

⁶³ This chapter was prepared by Susan Somach with Gulistan Yazkuliyeva.

Gender Policy. The Government of Turkmenistan (GoTK) has made an official commitment to gender equality by assenting to international conventions, including CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), and the CEDAW Optional Protocol (on 18 April 2009). The government also has provided updated reporting to the UN monitoring bodies. Turkmenistan has laws providing for protections in a variety of areas such as family law and property law. Additionally, the GoTK has passed a law on equal rights and equal opportunities (“Guarantees of Equality of Women”), although it has recognized the need for further revisions to provide for an implementing mechanism. Domestic violence is against the law, with penalties based on the extent of the injury. Although there have been a few cases, the law is rarely enforced. The government has also passed a Law about the Struggle with Trafficking and is working with IOM on the issue. Turkmenistan has been identified as a country of origin for trafficking of mostly women.

In December 2007 the *Mejlis* (Parliament) approved a new women's rights law, which made the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Liberties responsible for drafting human rights and gender legislation, integrating a new gender program into the education curriculum, and publishing regular bulletins on national and international gender laws. Although the law provides *de jure* equality in business, women still experience discrimination based on concern about their potential pregnancy and child care responsibilities. Few women are represented in the upper levels of government-owned business enterprises. Most are concentrated in health care, education, and service professions. Women are restricted from working in some dangerous and environmentally unsafe jobs.

The Government of Turkmenistan showed openness and cooperation with the gender assessment. All requested meetings with government officials that required diplomatic notes were granted, including meetings not only in Ashgabat, but also in Mary and Turkmenabat.

Gender and Politics. Women comprise 17% of the deputies in parliament and have been specifically included in decision-making bodies. The first president of Turkmenistan promoted the concept of women in parliament by saying: “She can be a good leader, decision-maker because she takes care of house and can be a good decision-maker.” Women candidates were also promoted by the executive bodies as candidates for elected office at all levels (*hakimyat*, *velayat*, and *Mejlis*). However, the trend is a decrease of women in elected positions. For example, women’s representation in parliament (*Mejlis*) has decreased from the former level of 24% and there are also fewer women among local elected officials as well.



Women serve in a few prominent government positions: Speaker of *Mejlis* (the constitutional successor to the President), Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Culture and Television (a vice premier position), Minister of Education, Director of the State Archives, Director of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights. Women have also formerly served as head of the Supreme Council on Science and Technology (renamed Academy of Sciences in 2009) and head of the state news agency.

Demographic Situation. According to the 2009 European and Eurasia Health Vulnerability Analysis, the gender gap in life expectancy at birth in Turkmenistan is nine years, with life expectancy of 59 for men and 68 for women. Some health indicators have improved since 2007 when Gurbanguly, the former Minister of Health and Medical Industry, became president after the death of President Niyazov. In particular, maternal and infant mortality have decreased and the country has improved in treatment of tuberculosis. There is also more openness in responding to health needs, including the issue of STIs and HIV prevention. However, the availability of data, including on health indicators, has remained limited.

There is general gender parity in primary, secondary and higher education, although certain higher education fields are dominated by young men. Specifically, technical institutions are generally considered as “boys institutes,” especially in the polytechnical institute and the fields of construction, oil and gas, statistics, etc. Only one institute, for economics, is also attended by young women. Universities are more likely to have a balance of male and female students.

B. Conceptual Issues

The term “gender” is still viewed as referring only to women’s rights and women’s problems. As in most countries in the region, the common view among the populace and the government is that the *gender* only refers to women’s problems. When raised, issues such as men’s health are readily discussed, but not within the context of a gender paradigm. Moreover, the official gender focus is more on women’s problems and how to resolve them within “the national context” rather than in relation to a universal standard of women’s rights and gender equality.

View of “Turkmen national traditions” includes gender stereotypes. Men’s and women’s roles are specifically defined based on the traditional division of labor. Women are fully responsible for housework and child/elder/disabled care. Men are the leaders and decision-makers. Women are expected to keep their families’ culture and make traditional handicrafts for their families’ use. In practice, and due to the pressures of modernity, the situation is changing in many homes where men are “helping” women in order to enjoy a better lifestyle (e.g., and enabling the benefits of dual incomes).

Shifting mother-in-law role? The Turkmen mother-in-law traditionally enforces the requirement that the daughter(s)-in-law takes the whole responsibility for household work. This burden often means that after marriage, the new wife no longer works outside the house. Anecdotally, some interviewed indicated that these stereotypes are changing, more so in villages than in cities. Interviewees indicated that the wives are now ruling their husbands; that harder physical work is done by men and that easier work is done by women; and that the budget has shifted to the hands of women who now want to live separate from their mother-in-law.

Gender segregation of job categories. Many job categories are still segregated as either “women’s work” or “men’s work.” Without addressing the gender segregation in higher education institutions and promoting more equal selection of professions, this division of the workforce is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Men tend to dominate in government jobs.

Protection of women as focus for women’s rights. Men in Turkmenistan, like in much of the world, are expected to be strong and brave and women are considered in need of protection. The labor protections for working women are a good example of this concept, with women prohibited from “hard jobs or jobs with harmful conditions” and working mothers prohibited from working extra hours and nights or taking business trips if they have young children. Discussions on women’s rights often focus on protections for women rather than opportunities.

C. Sectoral Findings, Risks and Opportunities

Economic Growth

Women lag behind in business but the government goal to increase participation. Women in Turkmenistan lag behind men in business development. The GoTK’s economic focus includes increasing the number of women in business. The government has plans to provide training and financing to expand women’s business opportunities as part of its 2020 business development program. The discussion

focused on women's traditional handicraft production, but the range of options could be expanded to include many other types of business activities.

Limited business information. The lack of information presents a problem both for job seekers and entrepreneurs. Business information, market research, and job information are not readily available, even



for those working in the economic growth field. Several of those interviewed pointed out that the foreign donor resource centers (business, internet, etc.) were the only places to get needed information. Internet access is not yet readily available (though dial-up services have started) and even when the internet is accessible, it is not fast enough to load content within a reasonable period of time. The Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs noted the lack of textbooks on business subjects new to Turkmenistan such as hotel management. Business texts are more frequently available in the Russian language rather than in the Turkmen language. Women are increasingly the new business entrants as the

government focuses on this issue through its programs. However, it is not clear whether they might be language disadvantaged if materials are only available in Russian.

Agribusiness activities. The agribusiness activities have been well-received and proven successful where they have been implemented. Plans are underway to continue and expand the development of greenhouse food production. However, preliminary discussions indicate the plans are to work only with men entrepreneurs due to the perception that putting up greenhouses is hard work and thus appropriate for men. Initial inquiries indicate that this assumption is based on the stereotypes of program planners and their failure to recruit women to participate in the program rather than a confirmed lack of interest by women entrepreneurs. Thus, such gender bias should not be built into the program design. Indeed, women in rural Turkmenistan historically were the ones who erected the *yurts*. Thus, they should be more than capable of participating in this first step in developing what should be a profitable greenhouse business.

Women's self-employment activities. Although women in Turkmenistan can be found in the widest variety of self-employment, entrepreneurship programs and business development policy tend to encourage women to engage in traditional crafts (i.e., carpets, embroidery, felt, woven camel's wool for bread bags, silk fabric, hand loom, camel's wool blankets), sewing, backyard farms, and, to a limited degree, food processing. To the extent that these areas are good economic options and are already the focus of the women entrepreneurs, they should be developed, but income generating programs for women should generally widen their focus to recognize and encourage other lucrative options for self-employment (e.g., greenhouses discussed above). Moreover, similarly situated men (unemployed and in need of additional family income) should also be encouraged to engage in small-scale self-employment activities to encourage economic activity pending job placement and create options for entrepreneurship.

Financing for micro/SMEs especially for women. Women have even greater challenges in securing financing for microbusiness and SMEs. As in many countries in the region, women in Turkmenistan often lack the collateral required to take a loan because the assets typically used as security (e.g., car, property, or building) are typically not in the woman's name. Thus, it was noted by several of those interviewed that women often turn to shuttle trading to get startup capital for a business. This process sidetracks and slows down women's business development, and may partially explain the lack of women in non-trade-related businesses.

Health

Attention to both women's and men's health needs. The national health focus has consciously increased its attention to men's health through the establishment of men's health clinics. Family clinics had previously established reproductive health centers for women. Then in 2004-2005, separate centers were developed for men, though men are still less likely to attend to their health needs (as evidenced by the nine year gap in life expectancy depending on gender).

Health education for boys and girls. Both girls and boys attend health education classes that were previously optional but are now obligatory for the first through tenth grades. Starting with the seventh grade, the classes include reproductive health topics. UNICEF and the UNFPA are working with the GoTK to develop age-appropriate curricula and textbooks.

Reproductive Health. Reproductive health issues require ongoing programmatic attention both for women and men. Although progress has been made with health reforms toward evidence-based health practices and implementation of safe motherhood standards, the rates of maternal and infant mortality are still high. Men's reproductive health issues, especially related to untreated STIs and infertility need to be addressed. Male involvement in family planning must also be encouraged. The UNFPA has a program on cervical cancer identification and treatment. However, they have identified an unmet need to address breast cancer but do not have the resources to include it in their programming.

HIV/STIs. The rate of STIs is an indicator that the HIV epidemic could spread very rapidly as it continues to cross over into the non-injecting drug user (IDU) heterosexual population. It is not clear how widespread STIs are, but the HIV Center has included a focus on it. Now is the critical time to ramp up activities to identify and treat existing STIs as a way to reach those who have already engaged in risky sexual behavior. Moreover, the general education/prevention outreach on these issues should include the connection of untreated STIs to infertility. The health outreach to MARPs, such as sex workers and ex-prisoners, is already on the national agenda. Additionally, there is official recognition that vulnerable populations need full social rehabilitation programs that include economic opportunities to avoid recidivism, with responsibility being placed at the provincial (*velayat*) level. Women ex-prisoners are particularly vulnerable as a result of family and social isolation (there is one women's prison in Dashoguz).

Men's health clinics. The government of Turkmenistan's recently developed men's health clinics offer a tremendous opportunity to address unmet health needs of men. However, now they need to expand their efforts to attract clients through awareness raising activities.

Healthy Lifestyles school curriculum. UNICEF is currently working on the health curriculum with the GoTK for students of all ages. The curriculum will include information on healthy relationships. The focus should include relationships with parents, siblings, extended family, etc. that will continue to be relevant in the students' adult life. Furthermore, the approach should be gender sensitive and avoid gender stereotypes that are often prevalent in school curricula.

Domestic violence awareness. The issue of violence against women, especially domestic violence, is largely hidden by cultural norms. Under such circumstances, an entry point to begin to raise awareness is through the health impacts. Such awareness raising does not need to use the term domestic violence but could instead use "family problems" or focus proactively on "healthy relationships" and "happy families."

Community health education opportunities. Considering the relative openness in providing health education, there may be opportunities to expand community outreach beyond nurses and doctors to community leaders (including elders) and religious leaders (Islam, Catholicism, Orthodox). As discussed

above, expanding health education for men and informing them about the men's clinics may also be effective through such community channels that already tend to be male-dominated. Moreover, health information should include women's and children's health issues to promote better understanding and sensitivity among men of the health needs of other members of their family.

Education

Limited textbooks on new subjects in TK language. As noted in the EG section above, there is a need for textbooks on new subjects in the Turkmen language. Although many students and teachers/professors speak Russian, this is not universally the case. Thus, schools/institutes/universities that teach in the Turkmen language are unable to find updated and modern teaching materials on a variety of subjects. Additional information is needed on who is most affected by this issue (e.g., rural or urban populations, women or men, lower socio-economic status, minorities, etc.).

Limited web content in TK language. Because Turkmenistan has not had much internet access in the past, there is limited web content available in the Turkmen language. The IATP Program has resulted in a limited number of web pages and websites, but Russian is still the language of choice since it is more widely accessible to those outside of Turkmenistan. Unfortunately, this language preference is stunting the expansion of web content available in the Turkmen language, and disadvantages those users who do not read and write Russian.

Slow internet access in regions but changing situation. The slow and limited internet access in much of Turkmenistan is creating an information deficit and potentially huge digital divide. To the extent that the internet is key to education, employment, business opportunities, and information in general, large swaths of the population are at risk of being left behind. Moreover, once fast internet is more widely available, there will be a need to ensure that people have the awareness and skills to make use of the resource to improve their daily lives. Based on global trends, it is likely that women, especially older women, will have less access and less time to pursue information on the internet. Yet their family would likely benefit from their familiarity and experience in this area, both in traditional areas of education and health care as well as their own entrepreneurial and employment activities. Thus, special measures will likely be necessary to direct training opportunities to women as well as men.

Internet training and computer literacy in rural areas. Access to internet in rural areas is limited and slow, but is expected to expand and become faster in the near future. Computer use in general is also expanding. For the last three years, secondary school curriculum has included information technology classes. Thus, in the cities, children are becoming proficient in using computers and internet. However, such classes are more difficult to run outside the cities, so internet training and computer literacy classes are still needed in rural areas.

Access to information. As discussed earlier, donor-supported resource centers have been identified as the best, and sometimes only, sources of information. This is especially true for those who otherwise do not have access to internet and/or do not know how to find relevant information without assistance.

Missing connection of education to employment. The educational system has been slow to adjust to the needs of the changing economy in Turkmenistan. Although oil and gas comprise a large segment in the economy, the sector produces few jobs. Thus, there is a big need for diversification of businesses. The education system largely operates without a clear connection to the labor needs of the changing economy. Students would likely benefit from internships, mentoring, job shadowing, and even more opportunities/encouragement to start their own businesses after completing Junior Achievement courses. The President has recognized in a speech the need to consider how many students in school who need additional education and could benefit from technical schools or one-year lyceum that provide specific

skills needed in the economy (e.g., construction, tourism, hotels). Developing such programs offers a unique opportunity to lay the groundwork for a gender equitable approach toward opportunities for both young women and young men seeking to enter the job market.

Youth activities. The Youth Union has a mandate to increase youth activities and has district centers in every region who work with many donors on prevention activities, youth awareness activities, computer centers, and responding to the President’s policy on healthy way of life (e.g., through campaigns against drug use and HIV/AIDS prevention). All activities of the Women’s Union also focus on activities for young women and have youth members on all committees. Some of the Youth Union activities appear to be reinforcing gender stereotypes with contests for young men on “strength and courage” and for young women on “beauty and marriage skills.”

Gender education. The Women’s Union is developing a gender education curriculum/program to assist in Turkmenistan’s commitment under CEDAW to overcoming gender stereotypes.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

Few NGOs, but possibility to work with GONGOs. Although Turkmenistan does not yet have many registered NGOs, there are several government organized NGOs that are engaged in development activities and available to partner with USAID programs. For example, both the Women’s Union and the Youth Union have already collaborated with USAID and other donor activities.

Successful community development activities. The Community Empowerment Project was universally praised for successfully motivating local communities to engage in local problem solving. Also commended were the gender sensitive approaches that resulted in substantial involvement of women, many of whom had not previously been involved as community leaders. Moreover, several noted that villages targeted for the community development activity have continued to be active and are less in need of additional participation in the USAID program than villages not yet involved in such activities.

Need for retraining and updated legal materials. Lawyers expressed the need for retraining and updated materials on the rapidly changing laws of Turkmenistan. The previous American Bar Association- Europe and Eurasia (ABA-CEELI) program provided legal updates for lawyers both in the form of printed materials and CDs in both the Russian and Turkmen languages. Having updated legal information available on a website would greatly expand the law’s accessibility among lawyers and the population alike, especially as internet use increases. Information on Turkmen law is also needed more generally, as indicated by the fact that the limited printed information currently available is much in demand. Such material should be written in clear language accessible to the general public.

Rural legal services. The rural legal services offered on a roving basis seemed to work most effectively when connected to outreach activities. In particular, there is a great need for basic legal education in the form of simple pamphlets on legal issues distributed to different groups in the community. Ideally, members of the community will become more aware of the roving lawyer and begin to build trust over time.

Social advocates training. Although domestic violence is still a taboo subject in Turkmenistan, those in difficult family situations – poverty, single parents, victims of violence – could benefit greatly from the availability of social advocates to assist them with basic information on how to protect themselves through legal rights.

Youth center initiatives. In addition to the current activities of the Youth Union of Turkmenistan (such as the USAID-supported initiative through the CAPACITY Project that opened two big youth centers to

help youth protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and STIs), the Red Crescent Society has worked with its youth volunteers to consider future programming. The youth center team has already developed some initiatives and funding proposals based on ideas and programs developed by vulnerable youth at their Red Crescent centers.

Gender sensitivity in the media. The media is government owned in Turkmenistan and almost all of the media workers are women. To improve the gender sensitivity of the media, the UNDP, in conjunction with the Women's Union, conducted surveys of journalists followed by training in 2006 and 2007. The training was well-received and there may be an opportunity to continue such training in the future.

D. Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Look for opportunities to partner with government organizations such as the Women's Union or the Union of Industrialists if assistance is needed in expanding **women's business opportunities** and identifying promising market niches.
- Continue and expand support for resource centers, especially with fast internet connections and "librarians" who can guide clients in how to find relevant **employment and business information**. Training should equally promote both women and men's access to information, with the timing of classes being gender-sensitive and women-only classes considered in more conservative communities (based on the preferences of the women themselves).
- Work collaboratively with existing government and NGO **business education programs** for both women and men, where women are increasingly the new business entrants. The Women's Union/UNDP may be good partners to consider through their more than 30 Women's Resource Centers, as well as Hemayat. Subsidies to provide for classes at no-cost should continue for the poor, single-parent families, and the disabled.
- Actively include potential and existing women entrepreneurs in **agribusiness activities**, including greenhouses.
- Expand areas of **women's self-employment** activities to include a wide range of production and service activities not limited only to traditional crafts, sewing, and backyard farms. Additionally, unemployed men should also be included in programs to encourage income generating self-employment activities. Train clients to conduct their own market research to determine what are the best opportunities for business success in their region.
- Develop/expand **microfinance and SME financing** options, ensuring that requirements are gender sensitive so that women are not disadvantaged by lending requirements (e.g., collateral requirements that are limited to assets not typically owned by women could be modified to include other assets women are more likely to own) and can have true equal access to loans.

Health and Education

- Continue work on **reproductive health** for both women, including breast health if possible, and men.
- Look for opportunities to provide effective health outreach to a wide variety of **MARPs** on the connection between untreated STIs and infertility as well as other types of STIs and HIV. If possible, work with women and men in all at-risk categories, including ex-prisoners.

- Work with Youth Union and community channels to develop **health promotion** materials and activities to encourage men to utilize available health resources such as men's health clinics.
- Coordinate with the UNICEF work on **healthy lifestyles school curriculum** and look for opportunities to coordinate with USAID-supported adult health promotion activities.
- Look for opportunities to integrate **domestic violence awareness**, screening, etc. into health activities.
- Integrated outreach to community leaders such as elders and religious leaders of different faiths. While these leaders are more often men, the **health information** should include content directed at men, women, and children's health.
- Assess the need for **textbooks in Turkmen language** by identifying the population(s) most disadvantaged and the topics most useful and/or in demand.
- Increase **web content in Turkmen language** and encourage both women and men to develop content that will be relevant to their own communities/interest groups
- Provide **training and internet access** to disadvantaged populations, including women.
- Continue **internet training and computer literacy classes** at IREX/PICTT (previously known as Internet Access and Training Program [IATP]) centers and with partners such as Hemayat, the Youth Union, education centers at universities/institutes, and language resource centers.
- Continue support for **resource centers**.
- Promote connection between **education and employment** within the Junior Achievement program, especially in entrepreneurship and business management, being careful to avoid gender stereotyping. Consider other opportunities to provide linkages to other US-based models and programs for internships, mentoring, job shadowing, etc. to help link students with employment opportunities.
- Ensure that the design and implementation of **youth activities** is based on gender equality principles and does not inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes. Monitor participation by sex to ensure that activities are responding to the interests of both young men and young women.
- Consider providing support to Women's Union's efforts to develop a **gender education** curriculum/program.

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Target new areas for **community development** activities. Continue gender sensitive approaches that encourage and support the equal participation and leadership of women, including young women, as well as men.
- Continue retraining and providing updated **legal materials** for lawyers on the changing laws of Turkmenistan. Create a website where such updated legal materials would be readily available.
- Develop and distribute printed materials (e.g., pamphlets) in clear language on various **legal topics** (e.g., inheritance, divorce, landlord-tenant disputes, etc.) to update the general population on the current Turkmenistan laws. Make materials available on the internet or through email requests as well.
- Continue roving **rural legal services** program but only in conjunction with outreach and other activities. Ensure that the lawyers are gender sensitive and prepared to assist both men and women in their legal needs.
- Continue support for **training of social advocates**, especially targeting new areas that have interested NGO or GONGO partners (e.g., Women's Union) and do not yet have that capacity/experience.
- Consider funding **youth initiatives** through the Red Crescent Society and other NGOs and GONGOs. Ensure that funding supports initiatives developed and led by young women and young men, which address any specific needs identified by either group.

- Follow-on work with Women’s Union to continue **gender sensitivity training for media workers**.

X. Uzbekistan Gender Assessment⁶⁴

A. Gender Trends and Conditions

Historical Gender Legacy. Uzbekistan still largely maintains the gender equality in education and health access that existed during Soviet times. Historically, the labor market situation for women differed somewhat in Uzbekistan due to the high birth rates, especially in rural areas, and labor surpluses. Despite the Soviet constitutional guarantee of the right to employment, fewer Uzbek women were working outside the home than in other parts of the USSR. Although urban women tended to have full-time employment, rural women were more likely engaged in low-paying seasonal work. Moreover, even working women were responsible for maintaining the family and home. Nevertheless, the majority of women in Uzbekistan were active in political and economic life.

Since independence, the economic challenges of the transition period have resulted in less access to health and social services. With recent efforts to reassert a national identity, more restrictions on women and girls are being imposed by families. For example, families are reluctant to permit their daughters to study away from home (where they would need to live in a dormitory), resulting in a drop in women in higher education. There are also reports of an increase in early marriage, increased pressure on young wives, denying women the right to divorce, and restricting women’s role in public life. According to anecdotal reports, violence against women, including domestic violence, rape, and trafficking are on the rise. For men, the economic challenges have led to migration abroad for employment, sometimes resulting in these men becoming trafficking victims.

Gender Policy. Women and men in Uzbekistan generally have equal rights under the law; however, there are limited mechanisms to actively enforce those rights if they are violated. The Uzbek constitution guarantees equal rights to women and men, and other laws (e.g., Family, Labor and Criminal Codes) also contain non-discrimination clauses.⁶⁵ Uzbekistan has assented to all human rights treaties, including CEDAW (Uzbekistan was the first of the five CAR countries to do so after independence). Uzbekistan has many laws protecting women, including prohibition of certain types of dangerous work. There are also maternity-related work rules (restrictions on night work, overtime, work on days off, and travel assignments; additional leave; preferential working conditions, etc.) that equally apply to men if they are raising children alone.⁶⁶ The Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the *Oliy Majlis* (bicameral legislature) takes discrimination complaints. Although more women made complaints than men in 2007, it does not mean that the cases are about gender discrimination. However, it may indicate that women have more confidence in the institution to redress injustices.

The institutional structure for gender mainstreaming is the Women’s Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Protection of the Family, Maternity and Childhood but has no budget. Women’s committees exist at all levels of government; in the cities, districts and regional structures; and 12,000 women are members of *mahallah* (neighborhood association)-based Women’s Councils. According to the OSCE, the government intends to pass a law on equal rights and equal opportunities in 2010, and also is planning to establish a study group on violence against women (VAW) and prepare a draft law on the VAW prevention.

⁶⁴ This chapter was prepared by Susan Somach with Ilgiza Sharipova.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 75.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 80.

Gender and Politics. According to the Women’s Committee, an Uzbek quasi-governmental organization whose Chair is the Deputy Prime Minister, 67% of Uzbekistan’s small businesses are owned by women, 12% of *Mahallahs* are headed by women, and the number of women in the lower house of parliament has increased from 17% in 2004 to 22% in 2009. Under Uzbek law, women must constitute at least 30% of those nominated for deputy candidate posts.⁶⁷ For the December 2009 parliamentary elections, 33% of candidates were women. Before the number of deputies was expanded to 150 in late December 2008 (with half of the new seats reserved for members of the new "Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan), there were 21 women in the 120-member lower chamber of the parliament and 15 women in the 100-member senate. There is one woman in the 28-member cabinet.⁶⁸

According to official statistics, women vote in equal numbers to men in Uzbekistan: of the 14,765,444 voters in the 2007 presidential election, 7,500,845 were women, i.e., 50.8 percent. All political parties have at least 40% women members, with one party, Milliy Tiklanish, boasting a majority of female members.

Demographic Risks. Limited disaggregated statistics about Uzbekistan are available to the public. According to official estimates, in 2006 the gender gap in life expectancy at birth was less than 5 years (70.2 men, 74.9 women).⁶⁹ Men’s mortality is most often connected to cardio-vascular disease, cancer, and accidents. They also are the majority of those with TB and HIV. Rates of maternal mortality are still relatively high.

B. Conceptual Issues about Gender

Sensitivity and confusion about the term gender. The term “gender” is not well understood by the general population or many policymakers. Although the term has been used in an international human rights context and by women’s rights groups, it is still largely considered interchangeable with “women.” Moreover, “gender” can have negative connotations, including being associated with an extreme type of Western feminist, anti-men, and anti-family values, which are understood as against Uzbek national values. The term “women’s rights” is generally more accepted by the GoU than “gender.” Nevertheless, the UN agencies in-country have an established Gender Working Group and have been working with the government on gender issues. During the gender assessment, there was an indication that the Uzbek government is sensitive to criticism about gender issues, which may be alleviated by a more holistic understanding of the term through educating policy makers about the correct meaning of gender and its implications for development.

Re-emergence of “Uzbekistan/national family values.” Many development activities are struggling with the government’s promotion of the mostly undefined “Uzbekistan/national family values,” which likely arose out of security concerns but have been most directly applied to efforts to prevent the incidence of HIV infection. Regardless of the lack of clarity of the concept, activities perceived to be contrary to “national” values have been criticized on these grounds. It is unclear whether the re-emergence of “national values” will continue to embrace patriarchal traditions or will move toward integrating progress made toward gender equality during the Soviet and most recent post-Soviet period. Concern about negative government reaction has led implementing partners to begin limiting activities in an effort to anticipate and avoid such criticism.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 31.

⁶⁸ [DOS HR report, Feb 2009]

⁶⁹Ibid, 16.

C. Sectoral Findings, Risks and Opportunities

Economic Growth

Unemployment and migration impacts. As in other CAR countries, Uzbekistan is experiencing the negative effects of migration to Russia and Kazakhstan, both for those who leave and those who stay at home. While it is generally considered an acceptable option for men to seek employment abroad, it is less so for women. Even when jobs are available at home, the daily rate for labor in Kazakhstan can be as high as ten times what it is in Uzbekistan. The government of Uzbekistan has signed an agreement with Russia to permit labor migration, though numbers are limited. No such agreement has been made with Kazakhstan. However, due to the limited amount of legal migration permitted, both men and women eager to migrate for work are often susceptible to being trafficked. Meanwhile, those family members who remain at home face other challenges such as being in a separated family, dependent on remittances, and vulnerable to risk of the migrating spouse starting a new life abroad. When migrants do return home they may bring health problems that compromise their future earning potential and/or aggravate family relations, such as when the migrants have suffered dangerous working or living conditions, experienced abuse related to being trafficked, or become infected with sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Women who are left behind when husbands migrate have to take on new roles, including earning money. Moreover, the lack of agricultural and non-agricultural employment opportunities in rural areas is driving an increasing number of women to seek temporary, informal, and often exploitative employment in the cities.⁷⁰ Thus, there is both a need and an opportunity to work with women to develop their entrepreneurship capacity and assist them in starting/expanding income-generation projects. Women are more often responsible for production from the household “backyard farm,” which not only help feed the family but also supplement family income through sales of the surplus produce. Programs by AgLinks and by the Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF) have proven successful in expanding such production and increasing women’s involvement in agribusiness. Women comprise 30% of AgLinks training participants, with the post-harvest trainings and produce drying being very popular where they have been offered. And, SISF’s Women Farmers Support Project has had considerable success in providing microfinancing and technical assistance to women seeking to expand their production of a wide variety of agricultural activities and products (e.g., farming, cattle-breeding, and production of dairy, meat, wool, and leather). Both programs seem well-positioned to expand their efforts by increasing the number of women involved (e.g., both where they are already working and in other locations) and by deepening their coordination among the women for production and marketing of their products.

Inadequate financing for microbusinesses and SMEs. Financing is still a significant barrier to SME development, especially for potential and existing women entrepreneurs. Experts have identified the shortage of equity available both to micro and small businesses in Uzbekistan as an economic development challenge.⁷¹ Microcredit programs, such as the one run by the Business Women’s Association were very popular with women. They operate two microcredit programs and 10 credit unions. In 2006, the Women’s Committee also established a microcredit bank where 90% of clients are women.

The demand for SME and microfinance exceeds supply and the terms (e.g., high interest rates, collateral requirements) limit the viability and profitability of developing businesses. For example, one credit union charges up to 24% interest and 120% collateral. Estimates are that microfinance institutions cover only

⁷⁰ Abdullaev, Evgeniy. A Portrait of Women Migrant Workers in Uzbekistan (2007). The article notes that women migrants have reported suffering abuse and sexual harassment, and often have difficulties in securing a *propiska* (residency permit) that would ensure that there are receiving legal income and eligible for social protection benefits.

⁷¹ Yuenger, Megan. Policy Brief: Microfinance as an Economic Development Tool in Uzbekistan (2009).

9% of the demand, and, credit unions tend to focus on more affluent clients.⁷² Microfinance is popular because the money is lent in cash, rather than going through the government-run payment system. See EFT discussion below.

Despite the stagnation in the development of banking finance to SMEs due to concern about government intervention, some credit unions seem to be flourishing. Should a legislative and regulatory framework be established, the availability of SME finance could significantly improve the business opportunities available to many would-be entrepreneurs. The low default rate and high rate of return of both women and men borrowers indicate that lender risk should not be a significant barrier to expansion, nor should it justify an excessively high interest rate for SME loans. A village savings and loan (VSL)-type program could help women not only to gain access to capital, but also to build social support networks crucial for the growth of civil society and political participation.

Business education for both women/men. Business education has been targeted at women through the Business Women's Association that has assisted many women in starting a business. Similarly, the Women's Committee operates Republican Centers for the Adaptation of Women where business planning trainings are offered free of charge. While there is still a need to support such activities for women, unemployed men could also benefit from business education programs.

Water users associations. Water users associations have proven to be a successful method to provide better coordination and rationalization of agricultural water use. However, the current plan of the GoU to consolidate farms presents a threat and an opportunity to existing water users associations. The current rules of the water user associations provides for membership of every farm owner. With farm consolidation, the number of farm owners will be decreased tenfold. To respond to the change, the associations could continue some type of representation based on not only ownership but land use as well (e.g., those farmers who continue to work the land without owning it). In making this change, the associations might also consider representation of home water use by providing a representation scheme for residents. Home water use is more often the domain of women and reflects different needs that are also relevant to community decision-making and conservation efforts. Thus, including home water users could increase the participation of women in water users associations, and would provide representation for the users of an estimated 20% of water (i.e., households).

Impact of limited EFT system. The limited electronic funds transfer (EFT) system means the business is still overwhelmingly dependent on cash transactions. The impacts affect every aspect of the economy – payment of wages, wholesale and retail transactions, internal and external trade, capital/urban/rural divide, etc. Although the government is trying to push for increased usage of the payments system, the public is generally skeptical due to problems with the system, lack of trust, and limited availability of access points to retrieve their money. Thus, they still prefer cash payments. The gender differences of the cash economy can be more subtle depending on the risks of carrying cash and the relative likelihood that women have access to the banking institutions where money can be readily retrieved. Government workers, including women in the majority of low-paid jobs, are paid their salaries using the EFT cards. Because the ATM access points often do not have money in them, they are forced either to pay a percentage to a shop owner to get cash off the card or to shop at stores that accept the cards, which usually charge higher prices.

Health and Education

Health impacts of migration. The health impacts of the employment migration from Uzbekistan are not well understood. The newly planned Health Outreach Project has included migrants as an at-risk target

⁷² Ibid.

group, but effective assistance will depend on identifying specific characteristics and risk factors of the men and women who are migrating and their likely health needs on return.

Reproductive health for women and men. While progress has been made in some aspects of reproductive health, Uzbekistan still has high maternal and infant mortality rates that require ongoing attention to improvement in maternal and child health to overcome. The situation has worsened since independence: doctors do not receive professional development/ongoing training; clinics lack maintenance necessary for adequate healthcare services provision; and healthcare professionals demand bribes for services and items like clean sheets. With the population of Uzbekistan growing, more attention is needed in this area, especially on child survival and maternal morbidity/mortality as well as nutrition issues.

Previous reproductive health programs have concentrated on women, with only secondary efforts to include men's involvement in family planning. The issue of infertility caused by untreated STIs is also a serious issue that should be addressed for men, but it also affects women as a newly married woman who cannot conceive may be divorced or abandoned based on her assumed infertility (when the problem may be male infertility).

STIs/HIV education, prevention, and treatment, especially for youth. The high rates of STIs are harbingers of how the HIV/AIDS epidemic is likely to spread rapidly in Uzbekistan. Thus, education, prevention, and treatment of STIs are critically important. The Youth Power Centers, developed as part of the previous Drug Demand Reduction program, are a valuable resource in communities with vulnerable youth. They provide a wide range of activities and services for boys and girls, most importantly the opportunity to provide direct peer-to-peer counseling by a dynamic group of youth leaders.



Unfortunately, some of the approaches toward girls at the youth center visited reinforce gender stereotypes (sewing and craft classes exclusively for girls so they can “learn what they need to know to get married”). Nevertheless, the female youth leaders (college students) modeled a more gender equal approach when interacting with their male counterparts, in terms of their active participation in a mixed group setting and their candor about the challenges they face coming from more conservative families and regions of the country.

Health outreach efforts are especially important for young men who are less likely to utilize health care services than young women. Moreover, untreated STIs can lead to infertility which, as mentioned above, is not only an issue of concern for the men, but their partners as well. With healthcare reforms stalled and the healthcare infrastructure rapidly decaying, Uzbekistan must consider how to confront the transmission of STIs (including HIV) to prevent the adverse economic and social impacts of infectious diseases, which impact women and men differently.

Disability issues. Although accurate numbers of children with disabilities in Uzbekistan are not available, the estimates are of well over 100,000, most of whom will experience a lifetime of isolation and social exclusion in institutions. A concern is that the Uzbek tradition of cousin marriage is a contributing factor to the high numbers of disabled children (although illegal, some are still sanctioned by religious leaders).

Despite the small number of NGOs in Uzbekistan, there are several dedicated to disability issues that are struggling with minimal support. Key issues on their agenda include medical care, rehabilitation and life skills training, inclusive education, accessibility issues in public buildings/businesses, and employment opportunities (especially for those with physical disabilities). Medical Teams International (MTI) is working on reducing child abandonment through increasing training and support of parents of children with disabilities. Their activities have almost exclusively engaged with mothers, both because there are fewer fathers staying in families with a disabled child and because the mother is viewed as the primary caregiver. However, the programs are committed to increasing the involvement of fathers and are actively trying different approaches toward outreach to men. UNICEF has taken the lead in coordinating initiatives for people with disabilities, including a sensitivity campaign to end the stigma surrounding disabilities that prevent families from seeking governmental and community-based support.

The Uzbek Society for the Disabled has 14 branches in the country, and works with both men and women primarily on accessibility and employment issues. Approximately 70% of the Society's 187,000 members are women. Disabled women are particularly disadvantaged in Uzbekistan society since they are mostly considered unmarriageable, and thus cannot fulfill the primary womanly function of being a wife and mother. Disabled children are often hidden inside due to stigma that the disability is somehow contagious and/or indicates a genetic problem that will make the child's siblings equally undesirable for marriage. The Society's members have created small business for income generation, including an enterprise to build the ramps that are now required for public buildings.

Orphans and child abandonment (social orphans). This issue of child abandonment is largely a health issue since many of the children have some type of disability that resulted in parents abandoning them to the care of the state. Under the Soviet system, the state was viewed as a more capable caregiver than a parent of a special needs child. Since independence, the FSU countries have struggled to reduce institutionalization; in Uzbekistan an estimated 55% of children in orphanages have one or more living parent. There is an opportunity to work through disability organizations and child protection programs to reduce institutionalization of orphans, especially social orphans. Examples of successful programs in the E&E region could be replicated, especially to the extent that they are similarly responding to the bias toward institutionalization of children with disabilities in the Soviet system.

Domestic violence awareness among health care professionals. Although domestic violence is still largely a taboo topic, the government of Uzbekistan has committed to passing a DV law. Therefore, there should be political will to increase support for the nascent DV prevention and protection activities that currently exist, e.g., the shelter in Bukhara. Health programs may provide an entry point by establishing protocols for domestic violence screening for patients.

Health education opportunities for nurses, doctors, *mahallahs* (women's committees), religious leaders. As noted above, progress has been made in evidence-based medicine and in health outreach activities through health professionals and community leaders. To consolidate, continue, and expand on past efforts, health activities should continue to aim health education toward nurses, doctor, and *mahallahs* (generally and women's committees).

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

Limited number of NGOs. A big challenge in developing responses to community needs is the limited number of registered NGOs that are operating. The NGO sector typically plays a critical role in filling gaps in government and private sector services, and tends to be dominated by women responding to issues that traditionally fall within their area of responsibility (children, disabled, elderly, etc.). The lack of NGOs means a missed opportunity to respond to community identified needs and to utilize local energy to respond to problems of greatest concern to similarly situated individuals. NGOs should also be

encouraged to engage both women and men in their activities and to overcome gender stereotypes about what are “men’s” or “women’s” issues. This is especially true regarding disabled children (see above).

The engagement of local NGOs by USAID is further stymied by a 2004 law on the disbursement of grants which requires that each grant be reviewed by a special committee. As a result, some grants are delayed for 3-6 months while NGOs await a response, and some have been returned to the donor after months of languishing in the committee.

Legal clinics for the indigent. The Tashkent Bar Association developed a successful program of legal clinics for the indigent focused on family, disabled, and elderly issues. These clinics provided much-needed representation and assistance in resolving many administration problems faced by some of the most vulnerable in the community. While the activity did not have a particular gender focus, it is not surprising that more women availed themselves of the legal assistance, given the greater likelihood that they are poor. Although domestic violence (DV) is still considered a mostly taboo subject, legal clinics could also provide training to their legal staff on how to sensitively deal with the family law needs of DV victims and then make available more targeted assistance to victims.

Lack of mediation, arbitration options. The lack of mediation and arbitration options for low level administrative disputes results in slow resolution and sometimes exploitation of the delay by parties to the dispute. Court process is slow and engaging a prosecutor in small disputes can be challenging (see example of condominium disputes below). However, efforts since 2008 to establish arbitration courts have been plagued with similar issues whereby people with means can abuse the system, e.g., someone who commits a crime being able to pay off their victims in order to avoid jail time.

Legislative gap in condominium disputes. The Housing Partnership Support project has identified the need for legislation to address condominium dispute resolution. Currently, the law is unclear on who can bring claims against condominium residents who fail to pay for communal services that the condominium association covers on their behalf, and where such claims should be brought. In the absence of legislation, disputes have to be brought in a court, which is an expensive and inefficient procedure for these administrative issues. Although the housing sector was historically dominated by men, many of the condominium association leaders are women, perhaps because the position is unpaid and involves lots of volunteer hours.

Domestic violence. Domestic violence is still mostly a taboo subject in Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, there is a small safe house shelter in Bukhara. These small efforts have largely been supported by the international donor community and will likely continue to need such support until the GoU starts to address the issue. Identification through health services may be a good entry point to explore. See DV in Health section below.

Mahallah women’s committees. Each *mahallah*, an almost exclusively male local decision-making structure, has a Women’s Committee. Similar to engaging with imams to assist in providing health information in rural areas, health and other development programs may be able to work with the *Mahallah* Women’s Committees as other entry points for domestic violence awareness within the context of resolving “family problems.” There are approximately 12,000 members of women’s committees in approximately 10,000 *mahallahs* across the country. The mandate of the women’s committees varies by *mahallah*, but generally they help to mitigate family disputes and advise on domestic and traditional “women’s issues”.

Trafficking in persons. The GoU has made progress in addressing the issue of TIP by passing the 2008 comprehensive anti-trafficking law, developing an anti-trafficking national plan of action, prosecuting some high profile cases, and promoting public awareness through a wide variety of media, and

maintaining hotlines and shelters for victims of trafficking, primarily of women and girls. There is still a need to expand public awareness of the issue to include trafficking of men, especially for labor exploitation in Russia. There are two TIP shelters for women and children only, one in Samarkand and one in Bukhara.

Developing community participation and leadership in other activities (youth power centers, women's agribusinesses, water users). Increasing community participation and leadership can help deepen results in several existing programs through collaboration with the DM approaches. For example, the youth power centers have developed democratic leadership structures that encourage both young men and young women to get involved in decision-making in this health outreach activity. Similarly, the water users associations have increased women's participation in decision-making that is important to the communities they serve. Also, the women's agribusiness activities such as Aglinks and SISF's Women Farmers Support Project are exploring opportunities to develop cooperatives or other group structures for collaborative production, marketing, or sales that will be led by women. In all three areas, women and youth, who are currently underrepresented in political structures, including at the local level, will be developing leadership and decision-making skills that would be useful in local governance should they be interested in pursuing those opportunities in the future.

D. Recommendations

Economic Growth

- Continue and expand **agribusiness programs** to reach more women and families, especially low-income rural families, with technical assistance and access to microfinance (VSL, if possible). These activities should also look for opportunities to assist in coordinated processing and marketing and sales of products, which can increase income generated and improve community engagement among participants.
- Consider targeting some **agribusiness training and technical assistance** activities toward low-skilled unemployed men at risk of being trafficked or migrating for work.
- Work with local business groups and experts to resolve problems with **legal framework for SME funding** (e.g., establishing SME lending funds). Replicate successful SME lending programs from other E&E countries – ensuring that risk assessment and collateral requirements are gender-sensitive and do not adversely impact female borrowers.
- Successful **microfinance** clients with good credit histories, especially women, should be encouraged and assisted in graduating to SME financing with better terms (e.g., lower interest rates, longer repayment periods, etc.).
- Continue support for **business education** for women, and consider adding some target activities for unemployed men who are interested in starting their own businesses and/or family businesses with their wives.
- **Water users associations** should develop approach toward farm consolidation plan to ensure continued representation of farmers who continue to use the land even after ownership has been transferred. Consider representation of home water users, with a focus on increasing women's representation.
- Ensure that **banking reform activities** and development of **consumer products** such as EFT cards are made more widely available outside the capital (including in rural areas) and are accompanied by educational/promotional programs that target both women and men.

Health and Education

- [HE or DM] Conduct a targeted preliminary **assessment on migration patterns** and related health issues, particularly focusing on the differences among men and women of different age groups, skill levels, geographic origins (urban/rural), and types of employment sought/achieved. The assessment should also include identifying typical health risks and how best to conduct outreach among different groups of returning migrants.
- **Reproductive health** as well as maternal and child health programs need to continue and expand male involvement in family planning. A specific focus also is needed to include male infertility issues. (see HIV/STIs below)
- Continue **STIs/HIV education**, prevention, and treatment, especially for youth, but also for adult men and women. Programs to reach youth also should broaden their reach to parents and schools within the context of healthy families.
- Provide support to **disability NGOs**, especially efforts to overcome stereotypes about disability and related gender issues that result in different types of discrimination.
- Provide support to activities to reduce **child abandonment**, and increase opportunities for placement of abandoned children with their original or foster families rather than in institutions.
- Raise awareness of **domestic violence** by including information/training on the health consequences of DV and the importance of sensitive treatment of victims in health outreach programs to men, women, male and female youth generally (including through *mahallahs*, women's committees, etc.) and health care providers specifically.
- Develop and implement a **DV screening tool** for health care providers.
- Use **healthy lifestyles and healthy family education/outreach** approaches to provide critical health information, both on evidence-based medicine and on sensitive topics such as male reproductive health and domestic violence. Provide targeted training for health professionals and community leaders (especially in rural areas).

Democracy and Conflict Mitigation

- Work with reform efforts to facilitate the **development and registration of NGOs** that respond to community needs.
- Continue support for legal clinics for the indigent.
- Provide training to legal staff, and encourage the addition of **representation and assistance for domestic violence victims**. (see DV below)
- Support efforts of rule of law initiatives to work with Government of Uzbekistan on **dispute resolution alternatives** to courts such as mediation and/or arbitration.
- Support efforts of **condominium associations** to include condominium disputes in legislation that provides for administrative procedures rather than needing to go to court.
- Support existing and nascent DV shelters, support services, and hotlines.
- Expand public awareness of **trafficking in persons** to include trafficking of men for labor exploitation. Identify an at-risk profile for men and consider targeting some business development activities to those men and their families. Encourage greater support for trafficking victims (the approach now is heavily prevention, evidenced by only two shelters in the country), including repatriation, short-term shelters, long-term integration (e.g. halfway houses), skills training, stigma reduction, and support for children of victims.
- [EG, HE and DM] Collaborate with other sectors in providing emerging women and youth (male and female) leaders from EG and HE programs (including youth power centers, water users associations, and agribusiness activities) with **training in leadership, decision-making, and other skills** needed for local governance and the development of civil society.

Cross-cutting

- Engage with **donor coordination on gender issues** through the UN's Gender Working Group (GWG). This structure could be strengthened by consistent participation from USAID representative(s) serving as part of the GWG.

Annex A Scope of Work

STATEMENT OF WORK Integrating Gender into USAID/Central Asian Republic's FY 2010 - 2012 Strategic Plan

Background

USAID/CAR's Mission partners with Kazakhstani, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik and Turkmen counterparts to develop a prosperous and stable region based on democratic principles, market economies, quality health care and education, and civic participation at all levels. The Mission does not have stand-alone activities specifically focused on gender issues, but works to integrate gender concerns across its portfolio.

Objective

In FY 2009 and FY2010 USAID/CAR will develop the Mission's new five-year strategy. As part of the preparations for the new strategy, the Mission is seeking technical assistance to undertake a gender assessment for the USAID/CAR country offices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted gender assessments in 2005 and 2006 for four of the CAR countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However, given the regional changes since those studies were completed and that no study was done in Turkmenistan, USAID is undertaking these gender assessments to gain a better understanding of gender, both male and female, issues across all sectors of the CAR countries, looking for guidance on identifying gender issues connected with current programming and deepening those activities and impacts, and recommendations for monitoring and evaluating over the new five-year strategy period. The analysis and recommendations provided in the assessment will assist the Mission in mainstreaming gender into its new strategy, policies and procedures.

Tasks

1. Conduct a Gender Assessment:

Note: This assessment is focused on the population as a whole. These are not to be solely female focused assessments.

- A. **Design and Conduct a Gender Assessment of the Current Situation:** Identify areas of inequality, lack of equal participation and access due to gender constraints. Determine the extent to which gender considerations are integrated into CAR countries' institutional, legal and regulatory environment. Identify key governmental agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other donor organizations that are active in the arena of gender issues.
- B. **Develop Recommendations for Integrating Gender.** Describe the key role of gender for each key sector (Economic Growth, Education, Health, Democracy and Governance) and recommendations on indicator development, data collection and analysis disaggregated by gender, (and possibly by other groups). Present recommendations for methods and actions for gender integration throughout the program cycle in compliance with ADS requirements.
- C. **Gender Briefings.** Organize and facilitate one or two sessions of one to two hours each for Mission staff in each of the CAR countries. Topics for the sessions will include but not be limited to: a

background to the Agency ADS guidelines on gender integration; why integrating gender leads to more effective results; and a summary of findings and recommendations.

- D. **In and out-Briefs.** Organize in and out-briefs with Mission Management of each of the CAR countries. Given that it is often difficult to arrange flights in and between the CAR countries, USAID/CAR recommends that an in-brief occur between the Mission and the consultants just prior to their departure from the U.S. via a teleconference. Similarly an out-brief can be scheduled also via teleconference just prior to departing each country.

Methodology

1. Gender Assessments will be carried out in each of the CAR countries between October and December 2009. The scheduling for these assessments will be closely coordinated with the country office representative (or designate) and the Program Office based out of Almaty, Kazakhstan.
2. Prior to departure for each of the CAR countries, conduct a desk top review of gender materials and information available, and review USAID Gender Policy, and programs. These will include: current USAID/CAR Strategic Plan (2001-2005) and applicable sections from the Operational Plan, Asia Bureau literature and policies on gender mainstreaming, background information on gender issues in each of the CAR countries, examine existing studies and other in-country data, gender assessments and action plans from other countries in the region, which can be used as models by the team; and USAID/M/OAA procurement guidelines.

With the Mission's support, the expatriate consultant team leader is responsible for pulling together any relevant background materials.

3. In consultation with USAID/W, it was determined that two consultants could divide up the five assessments [one expatriate consultant completing 3 assessments/one expatriate consultant completing 2 assessments].
4. In conducting the information collection phase of the work, the team shall interview the below key staff and stakeholders and collect related information. Each country office will work with the consultant to pull together a list of specific external meetings. However, during the course of the assessment the consultant may identify other groups to meet with to collect information.
 - Members of Technical Offices, Country Office Teams, and the Program Office
 - USAID implementers, as identified by the Mission in advance and approved by the Mission
 - National and local leaders and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) representatives, as identified by the Mission
 - Major donors or international organizations which have important gender programs in the CAR countries as identified by the Mission in advance and approved by the Mission
 - Stakeholders- residents, CSO workers and local government – officials in at least one region outside of the capital city [where possible, USAID/CAR will attempt to make sure the assessment team reaches one-two regions outside of the capital city]
 - Informal discussions with other relevant individuals

Deliverables

1. In-brief and Initial Workplan

Within two working days prior to arrival, the Expatriate Consultant/Team leader(s) shall provide an initial briefing and a draft workplan to the USAID/CAR Program Officer, John Morgan.

2. De-briefing and Report Overview

The Expatriate Consultant/Team leader(s) shall present an oral de-briefing to the Mission near the end of their work in each country, including principal findings and recommendations. Written notes from the de-briefing and a preliminary draft of the Gender Assessment Report will be left with the Country Office Representative in each of the CAR countries as well as emailing a copy to the Program Officer based in Almaty, Kazakhstan after the de-briefing. [JMorgan@usaid.gov and smajors@usaid.gov]

3. Gender Assessment Report

The USAID/CAR recipients will provide written comments within seven working days of each draft country submission. A Final Gender Assessment Report will then incorporate comments and be submitted seven days following the receipt of comments from the USAID/CAR Mission.

4. Training on Gender Mainstreaming

Expatriate Consultant/Team leader will provide briefings for the USAID Mission staff on gender mainstreaming. The objective is to increase awareness of the Mission staff in gender sensitivity and gender analysis, information about and skills for addressing gender issues and the ADS guidance on gender in USAID programming. This short course should be designed by the Expatriate Consultant/Team Leader.

Estimated Level of Effort

The Statement of Work will be carried out by an Expatriate Consultant/Team leader experienced in gender mainstreaming strategies and assessments, and supported by one USAID/CAR Mission representative and/or local gender consultant. The level of effort is as follows:

International Expat Consultant Kazakhstan

- 4 days of preparation time for desktop study and review
- 4 days of travel [includes travel to Almaty, Bishkek and Ashgabat]
- 11 days in country (six-day work weeks):
 - 3 days for discussion, reporting, training session with the Mission and in-country writing [includes an extra day for training. This takes into consideration the size of the KZ personnel – approximately 122.]
 - 8 days for data collection
- 6 days in the US to finalize report. (The Expatriate Consultant will be responsible for delivery of the approved, final report.)
 - 4 days writing and submission to Mission initial report
 - 2 days writing and submission to Mission final report [following comments from Mission on initial draft]

Kyrgyzstan

- 4 days of preparation time for desktop study and review
- 4 days of travel
- 10 days in country (six-day work weeks):
 - 2 days for discussion, reporting, training session with the Mission and in-country writing
 - 8 days for data collection
- 6 days in the US to finalize report. (The Expatriate Consultant will be responsible for delivery of the approved, final report.)
 - 4 days writing and submission to Mission initial report
 - 2 days writing and submission to Mission final report [following comments from Mission on initial draft]

Tajikistan

- 4 days of preparation time for desktop study and review
- 4 days of travel [includes travel to Tashkent, Almaty and Dushanbe]
- 10 days in country (six-day work weeks):
 - 2 days for discussion, reporting, training session with the Mission and in-country writing
 - 8 days for data collection
- 6 days in the US to finalize report. (The Expatriate Consultant will be responsible for delivery of the approved, final report.)
 - 4 days writing and submission to Mission initial report
 - 2 days writing and submission to Mission final report [following comments from Mission on initial draft]

Turkmenistan

- 4 days of preparation time for desktop study and review
- 4 days of travel [includes travel to Almaty, Bishkek and Ashgabat]
- 10 days in country (six-day work weeks):
 - 2 days for discussion, reporting, training session with the Mission and in-country writing
 - 8 days for data collection
- 6 days in the US to finalize report. (The Expatriate Consultant will be responsible for delivery of the approved, final report.)
 - 4 days writing and submission to Mission initial report
 - 2 days writing and submission to Mission final report [following comments from Mission on initial draft]

Uzbekistan

- 4 days of preparation time for desktop study and review
- 4 days of travel [includes travel to Tashkent, Almaty and Dushanbe]
- 10 days in country (six-day work weeks):
 - 2 days for discussion, reporting, training session with the Mission and in-country writing
 - eight days for data collection
- 6 days in the US to finalize report. (The Expatriate Consultant will be responsible for delivery of the approved, final report.)
 - 4 days writing and submission to Mission initial report
 - 2 days writing and submission to Mission final report [following comments from Mission on initial draft]

Expat International Consultant

Mid-level assessment/evaluation specialist with at least four years experience in gender assessment and programming is required. Prior experience in a former Soviet Union (FSU) country is required with specific experience in the Caucasus or Central Asia preferred. Knowledge of USAID Gender Mainstreaming and Strategy Development literature and ADS requirements are critical. Ability and willingness to travel and work under sometimes-difficult circumstances is necessary.

Local Consultant

USAID/CAR gender advisor will serve in this role in 1 of the CAR countries. For the other countries the Mission will identify a local gender consultant.

Performance Period

It is anticipated that this work will occur in each of the CAR countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) between October -December 2009, with all final reports completed 31 December 2009.

Special Provisions

1. Duty Posts: Almaty, Kazakhstan (travel to activity sites outside of Almaty/Astana will be required), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (travel to activity sites outside of Bishkek will be required), Tashkent, Uzbekistan (travel to activity sites outside of Tashkent will be required), Dushanbe, Tajikistan (travel to activity sites outside of Dushanbe will be required), and Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (travel to activity sites outside of Ashgabat will be required).
2. The gender assessment team is requested to bring lap-top computers with them and be prepared to use them at their hotel or an alternative location.
3. The Mission will provide a conference room for use by the team while in Almaty.
4. The Mission will provide workspace for use by the team while in Ashgabat.
5. The Mission cannot provide space to the team while in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan but will assist the Team in identifying meeting space (e.g. space in the hotel). The Team should be prepared to pay for the use of this space.
6. The Mission cannot guarantee it can provide logistical support in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.
7. A six-day workweek is authorized for all experts.
8. Local transportation is the contractor's responsibility when Mission staff are not available to accompany the consultants on field visits.

Reporting Requirements

The consultants will work closely with the Almaty-based Program Officer, John Morgan, and the Country Representative who will have oversight of the team while in the CAR. Entry and exit meetings of the consultants with the Country Representative, Program Officer and Technical Teams will be organized. All deliverables will be provided for comment to the Mission. The Mission will compile these comments and send them to the Team Leader.

Annex B: Bibliography

Bibliography

Contents:

1. Documents from USAID/Regional Mission for the Central Asian Republics
2. Regional documents
3. Kazakhstan Bibliography
4. Kyrgyzstan Bibliography
5. Tajikistan Bibliography
6. Turkmenistan Bibliography
7. Uzbekistan Bibliography

1. Documents from USAID/Regional Mission for the Central Asian Republics

USAID Assistance in Central Asia: 1992-2007 (6 pgs.)

USAID Assistance Strategy for Central Asia, 2001-2005 (150 pgs.)

USAID/CAR Common Indicators Operational Plan 2009 (4 pgs.)

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- Kyrgyz Republic Profile (2009) (2 pgs.)
- Tajikistan Profile (2009) (2 pgs.)
- Turkmenistan Profile (2009) (2 pgs.)
- Uzbekistan Profile (2009) (2 pgs.)
- Revised USAID Overview Uzbekistan (2 pgs.)

USAID/CAR Portfolio (2009) (15 pgs.)

USAID/CAR Project and Topical Factsheets:

- Brief Situation Analysis for Health Financing in Tajikistan, (6 pgs.)
- Democracy and Governance in Uzbekistan (2 pgs.)
- Education: Kyrgyz Republic (2009) (2 pgs.)
- Education and Development for Children with Disabilities Uzbekistan (2 pgs.)
- Education Programming in Central Asia (2009), 18 slides
- Health and Education: PMP Targets (multiple worksheets)
- Health Improvement Project (HIP) (2 pgs.)
- Health Outreach Project (HOP) 2009 (1 pg.)
- Investing in People: Health Uzbekistan (2 pgs.)
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- Strengthening the Health Systems of the Central Asian Republics (4 pgs.)

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Guide for Incorporating Gender Considerations in USAID's Family Planning and Reproductive Health RFAs and RFPs (http://www.prb.org/igwg_media/GuideIncorpGendrConsid.pdf)

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Annex C: Kazakhstan & USAID/CAR (Regional) Contact List

Pre-trip discussions

- Bob Wallin, USAID/W/ASIA, Officer-in-Charge, Central Asian Republics
- Gavin Heff (by phone), USAID Democracy Officer

USAID Staff and Team Meetings

- Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Team
- Health and Education Team
- Economic Growth Team
- Kelley Strickland, Regional Director, Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Office
- Rabiga Baytokova, Regional Gender Advisor and Exchanges Program Specialist, Program Office
- Andrew Sisson, CAR Mission Director
- Erin McKee, CAR Deputy Director
- John Morgan, CAR Supervisory Program Officer
- Maria Kim, CAR Program Office Junior Officer
- Dale Gredler, CAR Regional Contracting Officer
- Jeremy Strauss, CAR EG Senior Economic Policy Advisor
- Mike Trainor, CAR EG Senior Energy Policy Advisor
- Nora Madrigal, CAR Health Officer
- Larisa Mori, CAR Health Officer
- Bryn Sasakawa, CAR Health Development Officer
- Kairat Daviata, CAR HE Program Management Specialist
- Yekaterina Spassova, CAR DM Project Management Assistant
- Irinia Mitrofanova, CAR DM Project Management Specialist
- Inna Biryukova, CAR DM Project Management Specialist
- Maria Stefurak, CAR DM Media and Information Specialist
- Sergey Yelkin, CAR EG Project Management Specialist
- Nina Kavetskaya, CAR EG Project Management Specialist
- Lara Kudaibergenova, CAR EG Project Management Specialist

USAID/CAR, including USAID/Kazakhstan Implementing Partners

- Internews (regional) – Oleg Katsiyev, Central Asia Regional Manager; Dana Abizaid, Program Manager; Olga Kaplina, Project Manager
- PSI (regional) – Leila Koushenova, Regional Representative; Mira Sauranbayeva, Deputy Director and PIU Senior Program Manager
- Kazakhstan Small Business Development Project, Pragma Corporation – Greg Hemphill, Chief of Party
- Kazakhstan Business Environment Initiative, Pragma Corporation – Terence Slywka, Chief of Party
- International Center for Not for Profit Law (regional) – Elizabeth Warner, Program Director, Central Asia
- Project Hope (regional) – Mariam Sianozova, Regional Director
- American Bar Association, Rule of Law Initiative (regional) – Catherine T. Dwyer, Country Director in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan; Natalia Kuleshova, Staff Attorney, Kazakhstan
- Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (regional) – Jeff Ehrlich, President; Irina Shestiperova, Program Officer
- Roundtable with regional DM partners, Counterpart and IRI

Others, NGOs

- Center for Gender Studies – Svetlana Shakirova, Director

Donors, International Organizations

- UNIFEM – Yelena Kudryavtseva, National Programme Officer

Regional Travel

Shymkent – 2 days

- Legal Center for Women’s Initiatives “Sana Sezim” – Khadicha Abysheva, President
- NGO “Bereke” – Rosa Abdullayeva, Director; Gulsim Andabayeva, Project Manager; Britt Jenkins, Peace Corps Volunteer
- Business Incubator “Sodbi” – Tatyana Shpuling, Program Manager
- South Kazakhstan Lawyers’ Association – Raikhan Kobdabergenova
- Otyrar TV and Rabat Newspaper – Valentina Kulikova, Director; Zaure Uralbaeva, Editor & Anchorwoman; Elena Boyarshinova, Correspondent; Farida Sharafutdinova, Information Editor

Astana – 3 days

- USAID, Steven Majors, Acting Country Program Officer
- NGO “ZhARiA” – Nabieva Bulzi, Director; Assel Amanzholova, Volunteer
- UNICEF, Violetta Krasnikova, Child Protection/Education Programme Assistant
- IOM (regional) – Zlato Zigic, Chief of Mission, Coordinator for Central Asia; Pavel Salus
- Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project, AECOM International Development – Malika Koyanbayeva, Country Manager
- League of Women of Astana – Clara Eskendirovna Yerzhanova, Founder and President
- Kazakhstan Business Women Association – Raushan Sarsembayeva, Head

Kazakhstan Government

- National Commission on Family Affairs and Demographic Affairs under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Naubetova Rashida Aronovna, Gender Advisor

US Embassy Staff

- Jennifer Bachus-Carleton, First Secretary, Chief, Political-Economic Section
- Alyia Zhantikina
- Bryan Wockley, Second Secretary Economic Section
- Office of Military Cooperation, Jim Yentz, Lt. Col.
- Jeffrey Sexton, Public Affairs Officer
- Thomas Tanner, Information Officer
- Oxana Limareva, Public Affairs Officer Assistant and Democracy Commission Grants Coordinator
- Ambassador Richard Hoagland
- Pamela Spratlen, Deputy Chief of Mission
- Anthony Beaver, INL, and Anna Radilova, Political-Economic Section

Other Activities

- Training for USAID Staff (three 2-hour sessions)

Annex D: Kyrgyzstan Contact List

USAID Staff and Team Meetings

- Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Team
- Health and Education Team
- Economic Growth Team
- Andrew Seagars, Deputy Country Office Director
- Dianne Cullinane, Democracy Specialist
- Lira Djumadylova, DM Project Management Specialist
- Jenishbek Arzymatov, DM Project Management Specialist/Millennium Challenge Account Threshold Program
- Myrza Karimov, Education and Democracy Project Management Specialist
- Damira Bibosunova, Health Project Management Specialist
- Fatima Kasmahahunova, Project Management Specialist/Public Outreach & Humanitarian Assistance
- Erkin Konurbaev, EG Project Management Assistant (Osh Office)

USAID/Kyrgyzstan Implementing Partners

- Crisis Center “Sezim” – Bubusara Ryskulova, Executive Director and staff
- Chemonics Land Reform and Market Development Project – Chinara Arapova, Chief of Party
- Association of Civil Society Support Centers (ACSSC) – Bakyt Kachikeeva, Advocacy Coordinator; Aidar Mambetov, Executive Director; Aida Kurbanova
- International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) – Nookat Idrisov, Legal Consultant/Director of the Representative Office
- American Chamber of Commerce Kyrgyzstan – Ainura Cholpondulova, Executive Director
- Eurasia Foundation – Edward Winter, Director for Program Development and Evaluation
- LARC/Legal and Business Development Foundation – Almaz Musabaev, Executive Director; Tatyana Vedeneva, PR Coordinator; Chynara Shishkaraeva, Marketing and Development Specialist
- PACT – Donna Stewart, Country Representative; Altymaz Ryskulova; Lilya Utesheva, Senior Program Officer; Inna Rakhmanova, Program Officer
- ABA/Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI) – Azamat Kerimbaev, Country Director; Albina Kojontaeva, Program Coordinator
- ACDI/VOCA CAMFA II Project – Luiza Mamarasulova, Deputy COP; Buajar Abdykadyrova, Rural Finance Manager
- The Services Group TSG, Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project (RTL) – Rahat Toktonaliev, Country Manager
- Abt Associates/Health Reform Project – Anara Sultankerimova, POC
- Internews Kyrgyzstan – Mariya Rasner, Country Director; Adel Laisheva, Director of Programs; Alike Karabaeva, Grant Program Manager; Almash Shabdanalieva, Producer of Program “Open Asia”

Others, NGOs

- American University of Central Asia – Aida Alymbaeva, Director of Social Research Center
- Social Technologies Agency (STA) - Mira Karybaeva, Expert; Zulfiya Kochorbaeva, Expert
- Women Support Center – Aigul Alymkulova, Executive Director

US Embassy Staff

- Pol/Econ – David McCormick, Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs
- INL – Maja Kasykeeva, Marina Udalova

- PAS – Michael Rosenthal, Munara Munduzbaeva, Aziz Kudaibergenov, Guljan Tolbaeva, Turat Makenbaev
- Information Officer Michelle Yerkin
- Ambassador Tatjana Gfoeller (outbrief)
- Larry Memmott, Deputy Chief of Mission (outbrief)

Kyrgyzstan Government Officials

- MP Alisher Sabirov, Head of Committee on Ethics
- MP Dinara Moldosheva, Deputy Chairman of the Committed of Ethics and Reglament

Donors, International Organizations

- Soros Foundation – Tahmina Ashuralieva, Coordinator of Gender Programs; Kumar Bekbolotov, Executive Director
- UNDP – Nurgul Asylbekova, Country Program Gender Coordinator
- UNFPA – Nurgul Kindrebaeva, National Programme Analyst on Gender
- OSCE – Oleg Semenenko, Senior Human Demension Officer; Tarmo Viikmaa, Community Police Advisor; Venera Urbaeva, Senior Programme Assistant/ Community Policing
- ADB – Ainagul Abdrakhmanova, External Relations Coordinator
- UNIFEM – Indira Kadyrkanova, National Project Manager “Enhancing Economic Security of Rural Women in Kyrgyzstan”

Regional Travel

Osh – 2 days

- NGO “Meerban” – Liliya Ismanova
- NGO “Insan Diamond” – Jamilya Kaparova
- NGO “Kovcheg” – Mirlan Kydyrmyshev
- “Yiman Bakyt” Islamic Institute – meeting with teacher Buhaba and female NGO teachers Odina opa and Tohira opa
- “Yiman Bakyt” Islamic Institute – meeting with male leader, Talant ake; two male students; and ABA staff attorney, Temir Tashmamatov
- Focus group discussion with students from Gender Center of Osh State University; from Women’s leadership club (supported by Peace Corps volunteers, Matthew Bakko and Courtney Kelner) - 5 male and 5 female students
- Focus group discussion with Water Users Association Support Program (WUASP) beneficiaries – Nilufar Abdulhamidova, Country Coordinator; 4 male and 3 female students
- ACCELS – Fulbright Scholar and current head of office, Jyldyz Aknazarova
- Osh Regional Administration – Representative from Committee on Women’s Issues

Kant – 1 day

- NGO “Alga” – Tatyana Nikolaevna; Asel Dunganava
- LARC – Tamila Sergeevna Khadjieva, Director of Library; 2 clients/2 lawyers (2 female, 2 male)

Other Activities

- Gender Media Meeting with local activists, including media and filmmakers
- Training for USAID Staff (3-12/ hours)
- Training for USAID Implementing Partners (3-1/2 hours)

Annex E: Tajikistan Contact List

USAID Staff and Team Meetings

- Health and Education Team
- Jeffrey Lehrer, Country Director
- Kevin Dean, Deputy Country Director
- Tahmina Hakimova, DM Project Management Specialist
- Daler Asrorov, EG Project Management Specialist
- Mavjuda Nabieva, Education Management Specialist

USAID/Tajikistan Implementing Partners

- Population Services International (PSI) – Khursheda Rakhmatova, Country Office Director; Shodiya Mirkhaidarova, Program Coordinator; Furuza Dzhamalova, Inter-Personal Communications Manager; Furuza Kurbanova, Sales Manager
- IREX, Civil Society Division, Anna Crowley, Program Manager
- Tajikistan Maternal and Child Health Project (MCH), Mercy Corps – Brandy Westerman, Country Director
- Local and Rural Development Project, Emerging Markets Group (EMG) – Lola Rohde, Senior Development Specialist
- Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project, Mendez and England – Duane Beard, Chief of Party; Mutriba Latypova, Performance Manager
- Internews Network – Izzatmand Salomov, Executive Director; Angelika Popova, Deputy Director
- Project HOPE – Aleksei Korobitsyn, TB Program Manager; Majigul Azizulayeva, Project Manager
- Tajikistan Productive Agriculture Project, ACDI/VOCA – William Bullock, Chief of Party; Bermet Imankulova, Project Coordinator Europe and Asia
- NGO “Gender and Development” – Nargis Saidova, Executive Director; Gulshida Sherzamonova, Project Coordinator; Siyovush Sattorov, Project Assistant
- Regional Trade and Liberalization and Customs Project (RTLCL) – Parviz Kamoliddinov, Country Manager; Jovan Jekic, Senior WTO Advisor
- Project on Reduction of Violence Against Women, Avedis – Gulnara Petrova, Team Leader
- Save the Children – Geoffrey Poynter, Deputy Director Programmes
- Business Environment Improvement Project, Pragma Corporation – Nurali Shukurov, Country Manager
- National Association of Small & Medium Business – Matluba Uljabaeva, Chairman of the Board
- International Center for Non-Profit Law – Muatar Khaidarova, Director of Tajikistan Affiliate Office
- Water Users Association Support Project, Winrock International, William Bell, Chief of Party; Rano Rustamova, Public Awareness Specialist
- Rossiya Water Users’ Association – Tutikhon Sa'dullobekova, Chairperson; Hydrotechnical Specialist; Members (3 women)
- Mehtari Water Users’ Association – Members (3 women)

US Embassy Staff

- INL – Anne Carson, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Officer
- Public Diplomacy Section – Rachel Cooke, Public Affairs Officer

Donors, International Organizations

- Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation – Tatiana Abdushukurova, Education Program Director
- IOM – Zeinal Hajiyey, Chief of Mission in Tajikistan
- UNDP – Rastislav Vrbenskiy, Country Director; Yusuf Kuronkhojaev, Deputy Programme Manager, Local Governance; Khuvayso Shoinbekov, Project Specialist
- Eurasia Foundation – Azalia Dairbekova, Country Director; Sitoramo Safolova, Program Manager; Rashan Abdullaev, Communications and Program Manager
- UNIFEM – Nargiz Azizova, Gender and Governance Adviser

Regional Travel

Khujand – 2 days

- ACIDI/VOCA Ferghana Microlending Program (MDTM) – Shoirsa Sadikova
- Association of Entrepreneurs of Sogd Oblast – Abdurakhmon Khuseinov, Chairman
- NGO Chashmai Hayot – Bihojal Rahimova, Director
- NGO "Saodat" – Gulnora Yuldasheva, Program Coordinator; Marhabo Ibrogimova, Office Manager; Ikhtiyor Bobojonov, Field Officer for Ghonchi District; Mahorat Yuldasheva, Field Officer for Spitamen District; {Name}, Lawyer, Durandesh Project
- Union of Business Associations of Sogd Oblast – Numon Hasanov, Secretary; Masuda Turaeva, Deputy
- "Gulrukhsor" Crisis Center and Shelter – Malika Mirzobakhodurova; three staff members

Khulyob – 2 days

- NGO "Najoti Kudakon" – Kurbongul Kosimova, Director; Nodira Nabieva, Program Organizer; Tatyana Verkhoturtzeva, Coordinator of Self Help Groups; Gulnara Korbonova, Head, Children's Education Program; Latofat Ismailova, Accountant; Tatyana Rachkova, Psychologist, Crisis Center; Safarmoh Ibrahimova, Self Help Group; Bakhtijamol Mirjoeva, Social Worker
- NGO "Nakukor" – Muborak Safarwar, Program Coordinator
- NGO "Ilhom" – Qurbonali Navruzov, Project Coordinator
- American Corner – Abdulhamid Sharipov, Coordinator; Habibullo Nozimov, Inspector of External Relations of Khulyob Technical University; approximately 15 women university students studying computer programming or business and finance, in first, second, third, and fifth year courses

Other Activities

- Training for USAID Staff (2 hours)

Annex F: Turkmenistan Contact List

USAID Staff and Team Meetings

- Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Team
- Health and Education Team
- Economic Growth Team
- Ashley Moretz, Country Representative
- Gulnar Hadyrova, DM Project Management Specialist
- Serdar Yagmurov, EG Project Management Specialist
- Elena Samarkina, HE Project Management Specialist
- Vepa Berdiyev, HE Project Management Specialist
- Guncha Soltanova, Administrative Assistant

USAID/Turkmenistan Implementing Partners

- Deloitte/ EREC – Wepa Myalikgulyev, Country Coordinator
- Junior Achievement – Ayna Bayramova, Executive Director Turkmenistan
- H.A. “Hemayat” – Senem Nurnazarova, Head of Department
- ABA CEELI/ROLI – Seyran Soltanov, Senior Staff Attorney; Catherine Dwyer, Country Director in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan
- JSI – Sona Valieva, Representative and former COP for the Community Empowerment project implemented by Counterpart International
- IREX/IATP – Aman Amanashkatov, Country Coordinator, internet access and training program
- Counterpart International – Irina Dedova, former COP for the Community Empowerment Project

Turkmenistan Government and Non-Government Organizations

- National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan – Shanazar Khojaev, Head of Organizational and Youth Development Department
- Union of Economists of Turkmenistan – Yuri Aronskij, Vice President
- Dr. Murad Haitov, Professor of Law
- Arma Pensioners Club – Irina Adamova

US Embassy Staff

- Chargé d’Affaires Sylvia Curran (Outbrief)

Turkmenistan Government Officials

- State Committee for Statistics – Ahirkuli Gurbankulyev, Director; Atdayeva Mahym, head of department of preparation and retraining of specialists
- National HIV Center – Ovez Muhamedovich Muhamedov – director of the National HIV Centre of the Ministry of Health Protection of Turkmenistan; Tahnabad Babayeva- head of department of the National HIV Centre
- Hero of Turkmenistan Gurbansoltan-eje Women Union – Ogulhajat Amandurdyevna Ishangulyyeva, Chairwoman; Nabat Melyayevna Babayeva, lawyer, head of department on legal issues, Djeran Nurmuhammedova, senior specialist
- Central Youth Union of Turkmenistan named after Magtymguly – Mammet Hodjagulyyev, Chairman; Aygozel Bekiyeva, Deputy Chairman; Merdan Orazmyradov, Head of General Department
- Youth Union – Hojagulyev Mammet Gurbannazarovich, Chairman

- Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan – Aleksandr Sakhatovich Dadaev, Chairman; Halbagt Hangeldiyevna Reimova, Member of Board; Myahri Yalkapova, secretary
- Institute for Democracy and Human Rights - Shemshat Ataevna Atajanova, Head of Department of Democracy Problems and Protection of Human Rights

Donors, International Organizations

- UNDP – Mary Risaeva, National Program Officer Democratic Governance; Nina Kolybashkina , Assistant Resident Representative; Nurjemal Jaliliova, National Programme Officer Economic and Social Development
- UNFPA – Jennet Appova, Assistant Resident Representative
- UNICEF – Samphe Lhalungpa, Representative; Ayna Seyitliyeva, Programme Communication Officer

Regional Travel

Mary – 1 day

- Amanova Gulyalek, Deputy Governor of Mary velayat, Head of Women’s Union of Mary velayat
- Enebay Alashayeva, Resource Centre Manager;
- Ashir Charyyev – Head of Department of Education, Health, Culture and Sport;
- Eziz Ataballyyev – Head of Youth Union of Mary velayat
- Community Public Society Gunahal – Roza Karimovna Eshangarova, Director; Mirzoyeva Irina, Director of Resource Centre; Agadjanyan Sergey, IT Manager
- H.A. “Hemayat” (IATP Center) – Kurban Burgaev, Representative

Turkmenabat – 1 day

- Tumar Muhamedova, Deputy of hyakim of Lebap velayat, Head of Woman’s Union of Lebap velayat
- Shohrat Rustamov, Head of Youth Union of Lebap velayat
- Center for Languages #2 Under the Education Board of Lebap Province – Maya Gurbanova, Director; Seyidova Leyla – trainer on critical thinking
- Women’s Union Named After Gurbansoltan Legal Resource Center – Abadan Believna Khduaynazarova
- H.A. “Beyik Eyyam” – Roza Klychevna
- H.A. “Hemayat” – Nelya Kazina

Other Activities

- Training for USAID Staff (3-12/ hours)

Annex G: Uzbekistan Contact List

USAID Staff and Team Meetings

- Democracy and Conflict Mitigation Team
- Health and Education Team
- Economic Growth Team
- James Bonner, Country Representative
- Sara Buchanan, DM Development Management Specialist
- Hayrulla Mashrabov, DM Project Management Specialist
- Otaabek Rakhimov, EG Project Management Specialist
- Alexander Kalashnikov, EG Project Management Specialist
- Nilufar Rakhmanova, HE Project Management Specialist
- Ilgiza Sharipova, HE Project Management Specialist
- Preliminary Outbrief with J. Bonner and S. Buchanan

USAID/Uzbekistan Implementing Partners

- Istiqboli Avlod Youth Center – students, youth leaders and teachers; Liliya Khamzhanova Ikhamzayeva,
- DAI/Aglinks – Charles May, Country Director; Asror Nazirov, Senior Technical Assistance Advisor
- Medical Teams International – Alisher Sharipov, Country Director; Shukrat Arifjanov, Program Manager Eurasia; Yulduz Ashrabova, Program Support Manager
- Business Women’s Association – Dildar Alimbekova, Chairperson; Akbarova Sabirovna, Manager of Art-Salon
- Association of Women Farmers (at Social Initiative Support Fund) – Bakhodir Umarmkhanov, CEO; Elyor Abbosov, Program Director
- Consulting Centre “Future Development City” – Gavkhar Mahmudovna, Director; Rakhima Rahimovna, Housing Services Specialist
- Project Hope
- Capacity Project
- Zdrav Plus – Feruza Mamanazarova
- NDI – Clark Plexico, Country Director; Zebiniso Nalmova, Program Coordinator

Other NGOs

- Uzbek Society for the Disabled
- Tashkent Bar Association – Kseniya Rijkova, Attorney
- Business Communication Centre (established by TACIS) – Tadjikhon Saydikramova, Advisor

US Embassy Staff

- Pol/Econ – Nicholas Berliner , Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs; Holly Thomas (HR/Civil Society/TIP)
- INL – Karris Peffley (Pol/Econ Officer service with INL); Dmitry Dogovorov, Clerk
- DemCom – Madina Turdieva, Coordinator
- PAO – Molly Stephenson, Counselor for Public Affairs
- DOD – Lt. Col. Michael Yuschak, Defense and Army Attache

Donors, International Organizations

- UNICEF – Shakhlo Ashrafkhanova, Project Officer, Family and Community Empowerment
- OSCE – Bernard Rouault, Senior Project Officer; Lola Maksudova, Project Officer

Regional Meetings (in Tashkent)

- Businessmen's Association of Samarkand – Dr. Farhod Ahmedjanov, President
- Aglinks Farmers/Water Users' Association
- Techno-Economicheski Consulting Firm – Leonid Borisovich Gilyeov, Director

Other Activities

- Training for USAID Staff (3-12/ hours)
- Training for USAID Implementing Partners (3-1/2 hours)

Annex H: Sample Assessment Questions

Questions for USAID staff:

- Who is the current person on the technical office team who oversees gender integration efforts?
- How do you identify gender issues affecting your programs?
- What are key gender issues that you are currently addressing in your portfolio?
(men/women/young men/young women)
- How are you addressing them?
- Where have you seen progress in addressing gender inequalities?
- What do you anticipate might be gender issues in the future?
- Are there particular topics you would like us to look at during the assessment?
- Questions on particular activities to get more information, as needed.

Question for the implementing partners:

- In your original proposal, were you asked to identify or address potential gender issues in the project?
- How do you identify gender issues affecting your programs?
- What are key gender issues that you are currently addressing in your programs?
- How are you addressing them?
- Who is the current person/s on the staff who oversees gender integration efforts?
(men/women/young men/young women)
- Do you collect any sex-disaggregated data? What data?
- What gender issues do you report on?
- What response (if any) do you get from USAID on your gender reporting?
- Tell us about some of the successful strategies you have used to reduce gender inequalities.
- Do you see any gaps in the current programming on gender?

Questions for the international organizations and donors:

- What are key gender issues that you are currently addressing in your portfolio?
(men/women/young men/young women)
- Who is the point person on gender for your organization?
- What are the donor coordination efforts on gender?
- What is the government architecture on gender?
- Are there particular areas of inequality in the national legislation?
- What sex-disaggregated data do you collect? How often?
- What sex-disaggregated data does the government collect? How often?
- Tell us about some of your achievements.
- Do you see any gaps in the current programming on gender?
- Are there any emerging issues on gender?

Questions for local gender experts:

- What are key gender issues that you are currently addressing in your portfolio (e.g., research topics, implementation efforts, etc.)? (men/women/young men/young women)

- What is the government architecture on gender?
- Are there particular areas of inequality in the national legislation?
- What sex-disaggregated data do you collect? How often?
- What sex-disaggregated data does the government collect? How often?
- Where have you seen progress in addressing gender inequalities?
- Do you see any gaps in the current programming on gender?
- Are there any emerging issues on gender (e.g., religious, cultural, or economic changes) or related to gender and youth?
- Are there issues related to the shrinking of the government and/or shift to private sector provision of services?

Annex I: Training Roster

KAZAKHSTAN (regional office)

USAID/CAR/Almaty (42 total: 34W, 8M):

Director's Office (DO)

Sofiya Issenova
Veena Reddy
Ramila Sazazova

Program Support (PS)

Virginia Morgan

Democracy & Conflict Mitigation (DM)

Irina Mitrovanova
Mariya Stefurak
Kelley Strickland

Economic Growth (EG)

Erin Cole
Nina Kavetskaya
Anna Pupenko
Jeremy Strauss

Health & Education (HE)

Inna Kirilyuk
Sholpan Makhmudova
Larisa Mori
Brynn Sakagawa
Larissa Vakhmistrova

Financial Management (FM)

Svetlana Alfimenko
Svetlana Ivanova
Tatyana Kalyuzhnaya
Natalya Khvan
Oksana Lebedeva
Talya Zhuganova

Management Services (MS)

Mikhail Artyemov
Madina Baedilova
Yerzat Bekeshev
Andrew Drozd
Rustem Galiev
Yuliya Kovalchuk
Yuriy Lavrinov
Natalya Mainster
Alexey Moisseyenko
Anna Nedospasova
Svetlana Pak
Alexander Penskiy
Galina Pokatovich
Anastasiya Pornyagina
Tatiana Rossova
Anara Shomanova
Irina Volgina
Margerita Yunus
Aizhan Zhunuspekova
Natalya Zubkova

KYRGYZSTAN

USAID/Bishkek (8 total: 5W, 3M)

Dianne Cullinane, DM
Lira Djumadylova, DM/MCC
Myrza Karimov, HE
Almaz Asipjanov, EG
Jenishbek Arzymatov, MCC
Fatima Kasmakhunova
Lira Manabaeva
Tamila Yusupova

Implementing Partners (10 total: 9W, 1M)

Begaim Usubalieva, PACT
Karina Hadyloeva, Kampanion
Chynara Arapova, Land Reform and Market
Development Project
Evgeny Grechko, IFES
Albina Kozhontaeva, ABA-ROLI
Bibigul Babaraimova, WUAST WI
Jyldyz Niyazalieva, KAEDII/IFDC
Dimya Baisubanova, KAEDII/IFDC
Shaysieva Akinay, NDI
Lilia Utiusheva, PACT

TAJKISTAN

Dushanbe (5 total: 2W, 3M)

Kevin Dean, Deputy Country Director
Daler Asrorov, EG
Mavjuda Nabieva, HE
Garth Willis, HE
Malika Makhkambaeva, HE

TURKMENISTAN

USAID/Ashgabat (6 total: 3W, 3M)

Ashley Moretz, Country Director
Gulnar Hadyrova, DM
Serdar Yagmurov, EG
Elena Samarkina, HE
Vepa Berdiyev, HE
Guncha Soltanova

UZBEKISTAN

USAID/Tashkent (7 total: 4W, 3M):

Sara Buchanan, DM
Hayrulla Mashrabov, DM
Ilgiza Sharipova, DM
Alexander Kalashnikov, EG
Otabek Rakhimov, EG
Nilufar Rakhmanova, HE
Natalya Vasileva

Implementing Partners (9 total: 6W, 3M):

Zebunisso A. Naimova, NDI
Ibragim M. Sharipov, Panoh Shulasi
Viola N. Artikova, Research & Policy Exchange
Rakhima R. Ortikova, Kelajak Shahri Rivoji
Charles A. May, AgLinks
Asror A. Nazirov, AgLinks
Anna A. Nechepurenko, SEAF
Rakhima S. Nazarova, CAPACITY
Yulduz A. Ashrabova, MTI

Annex J: Training Materials

PowerPoint Presentation:




Gender Assessment Briefing for USAID/CAR
October, 2009



Objectives

- Review key internationally recognized gender-related terms.
- Describe relevance of gender to development work.
- Introduce the Gender Continuum.
- Summarize USAID gender requirements and available resources.
- Discuss indicators and reporting results.
- Explain the characteristics of a gender assessment.




gender = ПОЛ ?



Definition

Sex...

Refers to the biological differences between **females** and **males**. Sex differences are concerned with **male** and **female** physiology.




Definition

Gender...

- The economic, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being a man or woman.
- The social definitions of what it means to be a man or a woman vary among cultures and change over time. (masculine vs. feminine)




Definition

Gender Equity



Process of being fair to women and men, including using measures to compensate for social disadvantages that prevent men and women from operating on level playing fields.

 **Definition**

Gender Equality

- Equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards.
- Outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.

 **Equal vs. Same vs. Fair**

NY Mets new Citi Stadium:

- 374 restroom facilities for women
- 351 for men



How does this relate to equity and equality?

 **Definition**

Women's Empowerment



Improves the status of women to enhance their decision-making capacity and participation at all levels.

 **Definition**

Constructive Men's Engagement

- Promotes men's involvement in family and community.
- Engages boys and men to achieve gender equality.
- <http://www.menengage.org>

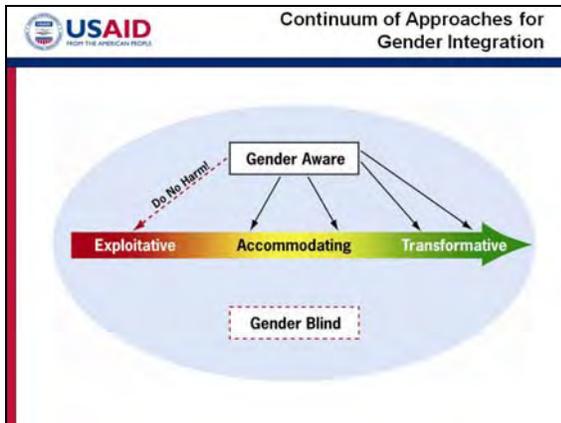


 **Greater EQUALITY is the result!**

EQUITY strategies are the means to achieve the result!

 **Examples of gender equity strategies**

- Increasing women's skills, resources, and capacity for *decision-making and leadership roles* in public and private spheres
- Mitigating the *time demands of household work* on women and girls through community efforts that provide such resources as food, education, expenses, household help, farm labor, and child care;
- Increasing quality of and access to formal, non-formal, or *alternative approaches to education*
- Supporting *positive male norms* and the engagement of *men as partners* and in families
- Increasing women's *access to income and productive resources*.



- Activity Directions**
- Break into groups.
 - Read scenarios.
 - Discuss in groups where each scenario falls on the Continuum. Identify the intention of the project, but categorize it by what actually happened. (10 minutes)
 - Decide where the scenario you have should be placed on the continuum.

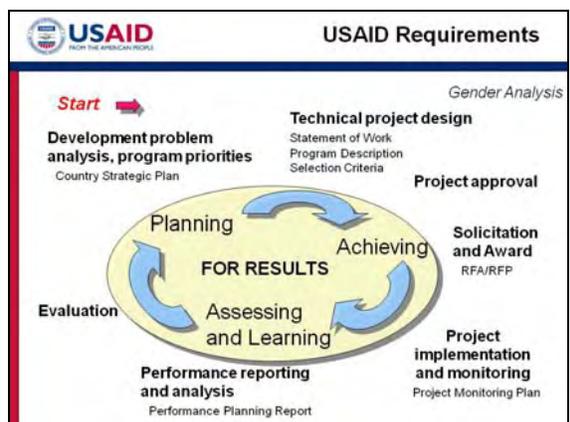
Rationale

Why is integrating gender into USAID's programs important?



- Gender norms, relations and inequities affect development outcomes
- Addressing gender improves program outcomes and enhances sustainability

- USAID Requirements**
- Gender Analysis:**
- An analytical process that identifies the differences, potential inequities and gender-based barriers experienced by men and women.
 - Mandatory at project level.
 - Resources available through your bureau and USAID website:
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/gender/gender_analysis.html



USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Gender-Sensitive Indicators**

- Measure gender dynamics in a target group over time
- Measure progress towards achieving gender equality
- Impact of our programs on the different gender groups
- New indicators often not necessary – disaggregation of existing data
- Little or no cost associated
- Ensure consideration of gender throughout monitoring and evaluation

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Key Messages**



- GENDER IS ABOUT WOMEN and MEN
- GENDER MATTERS: gender blind is not acceptable development practice. Being gender aware will strengthen your contribution to development.
- SEEK TO UNDERSTAND GENDER ISSUES: dig into the problem and go beyond the obvious interpretation of facts. Ask "why?", repeatedly.
- INTEGRATING GENDER INTO USAID PROGRAMMING IS MANDATORY. There are resources available when you need them within USAID.

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Gender Assessments**

- Identify examples of good practices
- Suggests areas for improvement (e.g., project activities, language in indicators, program management)
- Suggests ways to collect or analyze sex-disaggregated data to improve the measurement of results that narrow gaps between women and men
- Helps you answer the two questions posed by the ADS:
 - How will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results?
 - How will proposed results affect the relative status of men and women?

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Areas of focus**

Three areas of interest:

- Program implementation: how to make good programs better
- Identifying areas of gender discrimination in national legislation
- Review of some areas of USAID mission operations with respect to gender
 - Is there a work group on gender
 - Are people aware of available gender resources

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE **Resources at USAID**

Websites

Office of Women in Development:
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/

Africa Bureau:
<http://inside.usaid.gov/AFR/sectors/gender.html>

Asia and the Middle East Bureau:
http://www.usaid.gov/locations/middle_east/sectors/gender/
<http://www1.usaid.gov/locations/asia/sectors/gender/>

Europe and Eurasia Bureau:
<http://inside.usaid.gov/EE/dgst/st/index.php?q=no/de/158>

Interagency Gender Working Group:
<http://www.igwg.org>



Interactive Exercises:

- Gender Continuum Scenarios
- Sex vs. Gender Quiz ***
- Reporting Activity ***
- Gender Analysis for Projects ***

*** Only for expanded version of training

The following five additional slides were used only in expanded versions of the training:

 **Examples of Gender-Sensitive Indicators**



- % of available credit and financial and technical support going to men/women
- % of girls/boys immunized against specific infections
- % of women in decision-making positions in the government (parliament, local government)
- % access to specialized training (technical and professional) by sex
- % of female/male labor force in agriculture, industry and services; managerial and professional occupations

 **Reporting Results**

- Discrepancies are frequent
- Gender groups may be facing different issues
- Analysis: ask questions!
 - Why is there a difference?
 - Is that a problem?
 - What can/should we do to address that?
- Talk to your CTO/COTAR

 **Reporting Activity**

- Your organization implements an activity for university administrators. In your most recent workshop 85% percent of the participants were men.
- How can you explain the discrepancy in participation?
- What actions (if any) can you suggest to make the project more gender balanced?

 **Implementing Partner Gender Integration**

- Consider gender when **planning programs**
- Develop gender-sensitive **indicators**
- Collect sex-disaggregated **data**
- **Analyze differences** to understand what is happening
- Include gender in **progress reports**, etc.
- Consider **differences** by social group
- Anticipate **unintended effects**

 **Implementing Partner Gender Integration**

- Consider gender when **planning programs**
- Develop gender-sensitive **indicators**
- Collect sex-disaggregated **data**
- **Analyze differences** to understand what is happening
- Include gender in **progress reports**, etc.
- Consider **differences** by social group
- Anticipate **unintended effects**