



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# **USAID/CENTRAL ASIA GENDER AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS FINAL REPORT**

**August 2019**

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by ME&A, Inc.

# USAID/CENTRAL ASIA GENDER AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development under Contract/Task Order Number: 72011518D00003/72011519F00004

It was prepared independently by:

Danka Rapic, Team Leader/Evaluation Specialist  
Anna Kirey, Gender Expert  
Zaitunbibi Naimova, Youth Expert

**Contractor:**

ME&A, Inc.  
4350 East-West Highway, Suite 210  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Tel: 301-652-4334  
<http://www.meandahq.com/>

**DISCLAIMER**

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

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of the Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA) report is a result of broader consultations and contributions by various individuals and stakeholders during the GSIA process. The analysis team would like to give a special thank you to USAID staff for the documents, logistical support and information provided during the interviews. In particular, Regional Gender/Training Advisor and COR, Rabiga Baytokova and, Heath Cosgrove, Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Operations (SPO) were invaluable in their integral cooperation and technical guidance. The team further thanks in-country Gender Advisors, Ilgiza Sharipova and Malika Jurakulova, for their vital participation and high-quality support in facilitating field data collection to ensure a successful GSIA report.

# CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... i
  - Purpose .....i
  - Methods and Limitations.....i
  - Main Findings: Gender Analysis Five Domains Framework.....i
  - Main Findings: Sectoral ..... iii
  - Main Findings: Mission Operational .....v
  - Overall Recommendations.....vi
- 1.0 GSIA BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE..... 1
- 2.0 METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS ..... 1
  - 2.1 Methodology..... 1
    - 2.1.1 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis ..... 1
    - 2.1.2 Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis ..... 2
  - 2.2 Limitations..... 3
- 3.0 GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY FRAMEWORK..... 3
  - 3.1 USAID Framework..... 3
  - 3.2 International Framework..... 5
- 4.0 REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION..... 6
  - 4.1 Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices ..... 7
  - 4.2 Cultural Norms and Beliefs ..... 8
  - 4.3 Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use ..... 9
  - 4.4 Access to and Control over Assets and Resources ..... 10
  - 4.5 Patterns of Power and Decision-Making..... 11
- 5.0 FINDINGS BY SECTOR ..... 11
  - 5.1 Economic Growth ..... 11
    - 5.1.1 Investment in Trade and Markets ..... 11
    - 5.1.2 Energy ..... 12
    - 5.1.3 Water ..... 13
  - 5.2 Democracy And Governance..... 13
    - 5.2.1 Civil Society ..... 13
    - 5.2.2 Media ..... 14
    - 5.2.3 Justice and Governance ..... 14
    - 5.2.4 CVE ..... 14
    - 5.2.5 CTIP..... 15
  - 5.3 Social Sector Improvements (Health and Education) ..... 16
    - 5.3.1 Basic Education..... 16
    - 5.3.2 TB..... 16
    - 5.3.3 HIV ..... 16
- 6.0 GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AT USAID/CENTRAL ASIA..... 17
- 7.0 CONCLUSIONS ..... 18
- 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS..... 18
  - 8.1 Strategic Recommendatlons..... 18
  - 8.2 Sectoral Recommendations..... 19
    - 8.2.1 Economic Growth ..... 19
    - 8.2.2 Democracy and Governance ..... 20
    - 8.2.3 Social Sector Improvements (Education and Health) .....21

8.3 Mission Operational Recommendations .....	21
ANNEXES .....	23
Annex 1: GSIA Statement of Work .....	24
Annex 2: Illustrative Performance and Context Indicators.....	36
Annex 3: Bibliography.....	40
Annex 4: GSIA Country Report – Kazakhstan.....	47
Annex 5: GSIA Country report – Tajikistan .....	81
Annex 6: GSIA Country report – Turkmenistan.....	107
Annex 7: GSIA Country report – Uzbekistan .....	127
Annex 8: List of Respondents.....	149
Annex 9: Interview Tools .....	152
Annex 10: Survey Analysis.....	155

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of KIIs, FGDs, and Site Visits.....	2
Table 2: Inclusive Development Commitments on J2SR.....	4
Table 3: USAID Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework .....	4
Table 4: International Gender Equality Indices Rankings for Four Countries.....	6

# ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADS	Automated Directives System
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
ARGO	Civil Society Development Organization
AVC	Agricultural Value Chains
CA	Central Asia
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COR	Contract Officer Representative
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTIP	Combating Trafficking in Persons
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAR	Dignity and Rights
DO	Development Objective
DPO	Disabled People Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
F	Foreign Assistance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FtF	Feed the Future
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEFE	Gender Equality and Female Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GONGO	Governmental NGO
GSIA	Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDWG	Inclusive Development Working Group
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
IT	Information Technology
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
J2SR	Journey to Self-Reliance
JRUP	Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan Program
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MDR-TB	Multi Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MSM	Men Who Have Sex With Men
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PoC	Point of Contact
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAWA	Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Description</b>
TB	Tuberculosis
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WEEE	Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE

The United States Agency for International Development in Central Asia (USAID/CA) is currently in the process of developing its new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS). ME&A was tasked to conduct a Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA) to inform the Mission's new RDCCS, Development Objectives (DOs), and Intermediate Results (IRs).

The GSIA objectives are to:

- Help USAID/CA understand and explain macro-level challenges between males and females that exist within and between four countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).
- Identify how gender norms and power relations may influence achievement of the Mission's specific objectives in each context (e.g., country, geographic, cultural, institutional, economic, etc.).
- Explore issues related to youth; people with disabilities; ethnic and religious minorities<sup>1</sup>; and, where permissible, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons.

## METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The methods used in the GSIA included desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and an online survey. From July 1<sup>st</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>, the analysis team interviewed 66 individuals/organizations in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan (via Skype/phone); and conducted six FGDs and one site visit to Bohtar, Khatlon district in Tajikistan. Limitations included a possible bias in respondent selection, presence of USAID/CA staff in select interviews, lack of data, and unavailability of respondents.

## MAIN FINDINGS: GENDER ANALYSIS FIVE DOMAINS FRAMEWORK

### Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices

The Constitutions of all four countries guarantee equality of men and women. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have separate gender equality laws and gender equality-related policies, strategies, or national action plans, which have largely been created as a result of the countries having ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW), or because of their efforts to nationalize Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Existing gender equality policies in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, present women's roles through the lens of the family, which takes away women's standing as independent individuals with agency and rights, as endorsed by the CEDAW and SDGs.

All four countries have gender mainstreaming mechanisms: the National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy in Kazakhstan; The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan; the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan; and the Women's Union in Turkmenistan. However, they are more involved with service provision than decision-making at the policy level and, as such, can only provide a piecemeal approach to addressing gender inequality, which is neither effective nor sustainable. Out of four countries, only Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have gender-based violence (GBV)/domestic violence (DV) legislation. Uzbekistan is reportedly due to adopt its DV law in September 2019. All four countries have developed legislation that protects people with disabilities, but their implementation is weak. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are the only two countries in Central Asia that did not ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD); however, Tajikistan is scheduled to ratify it in 2021. Despite progressive disability legislation, disability is still viewed from a medical rather than social empowerment perspective. None of the four countries provide legal protection and guarantee of equal rights for LGBTI individuals. In fact, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, same sex conduct between men is criminalized.

### Cultural Norms and Beliefs

---

<sup>1</sup> Ethnic and religious minorities were generally not mentioned as a specific area of concern by the stakeholders, apart from select comments related to Fergana Valley. The analysis therefore did not include a strong focus on ethnic and religious minorities.



Despite a fairly progressive outlook and practical policies on gender equality promoted and implemented by the former Soviet Union for decades, cultural norms, many of which are harmful to women and girls and perpetuate gender inequality, managed to survive and have even become more prominent since independence. Norms about early marriage, bride kidnapping, and polygamy are still alive and well, albeit in rural and more conservative areas of the region. Boys' and girls' life paths are generally laid out for them from early childhood based on gender stereotypes. Families encourage their girls to study health or education, while boys are encouraged to study science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), information technology (IT), etc. This segregated approach is later translated into the labor market, where men and women remain in their accepted and socially prescribed "spheres of influence."

Perhaps one of the most damaging cultural perceptions in the region is about GBV/DV, which are largely considered a private, family issue. This way of thinking discourages women from reporting the violence to law enforcement, and encourages them to turn to traditional justice channels, such as *mahallas* in Uzbekistan. For those women who manage to get divorced, gender stereotypes deem them to be second class citizens with "low morals." People with disabilities are perceived as medical cases and unable to make their own decisions, obtain or keep a job, and contribute to society. Women with disabilities face an additional layer of challenges based on their sex. They have a more challenging time getting married than men with disabilities; and their reproductive rights and choices are often challenged by the medical professionals who encourage them not to get pregnant or to have an abortion if they already are pregnant. Negative cultural beliefs about LGBTI individuals are widespread in all four countries, although some respondents in Kazakhstan claim that the situation is improving, especially in Almaty and bigger urban centers. Social beliefs also support the stigma that is attached to people with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

### **Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

Gender roles and responsibilities are a direct result of cultural beliefs and norms. While there are some differences between the four countries, and certainly between rural and urban population, broadly speaking, girls are taught from an early age that their roles are to take care of the house, get married, have children, and take care of them and their husbands. As such, the overwhelming majority of unpaid, and therefore less valued, work is performed by women. Gender roles prescribed by the society are also visible in gender segregation in education and the labor market, where women are largely concentrated in education, health, or the service industry while men are in STEM, IT, and physical sectors such as construction, oil, gas, and energy. The sectors where physical strength is valued are usually not considered appropriate for women.

### **Access to and Control Over Assets and Resources**

In all four countries, despite existing laws on equality, there are limitations to women's and other vulnerable groups' access to and control over certain assets and resources. Women have limited access to education due to costs that their families often cannot pay. For young women who do manage to get a higher education, their chosen career paths are in the lower paying fields that will lead to lower paying jobs. Lack of free education also negatively affects other disadvantaged groups, including people in rural areas and low-income people. Similarly, access to education is curtailed for people with disabilities who must attend special schools, which segregates them from the mainstream society and further reinforces the idea of them as being different and "other." Women are also disadvantaged in access to starting a business as well as in access to justice, especially in regard to GBV/DV cases. The justice systems have also been unfriendly towards LGBTI population who have reportedly experienced violence and extortion in the hands of law enforcement. Marginalized groups, including migrants, people with TB and HIV (especially women), men who have sex with men (MSM), and the LGBTI population, experience obstacles in access to health care. LGBTI individuals report being discriminated against by the health care professionals. Access to information is curtailed for all citizens of Turkmenistan as well as for those who have limited access to the Internet or do not speak Russian in other three countries.

## Patterns of Power and Decision-Making

Men are decision-makers at the government level. In all four countries, women's representation in the Parliament is low. In Kazakhstan, women represent 27.6 percent of the members of the Lower House of the Parliament and make up 22.2 percent in local representative bodies. In Turkmenistan, in 2016, women made up 27.42 percent of the deputies of the Mejlis. In Tajikistan, in 2017, women constituted 21.1 percent of the members of the Majlis-i Milli (upper house) of the Majlis-i Oli. Uzbekistan has the lowest representation of women in the Parliament, at 16 percent in 2017. Women's representation in Parliament is often used as one of the indicators of women's empowerment. However, several respondents have shared that this metric may not be appropriate for the region. Women's representation is largely dependent on the ruling party, and they are awarded high-level positions for being party supporters. This means that their alliance may not necessarily lie with advocating for gender equality and women's rights, but with the agenda that is being promoted by the ruling party.

## MAIN FINDINGS: SECTORAL

### Economic Growth

#### *Investment in Trade and Markets*

Across the region, women are underrepresented in the workforce and in small and medium enterprise (SME) ownership and make less money than their male counterparts. Due to cultural norms and gender roles and responsibilities, women are the primary caretakers of children and home, therefore, have fewer opportunities for full time employment. Lack of robust social protection system that would provide affordable or free childcare is a significant obstacle to their workforce participation. All four countries suffer from gender occupational segregation, gender pay gap, and horizontal segregation, evidenced by the absence of women in higher paid, decision-making positions. Challenges specific to women's entry into the SME sector include lack of self-esteem and family support, and limited access to finance, often based on inability to obtain collateral for a loan.

USAID/CA's support of agriculture and land rights sectors is mostly limited to Tajikistan, through the Feed the Future (FtF) activities, apart from the Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) project in Uzbekistan. In general, women, as the majority of the agricultural workforce, provide free labor and rarely have control over earnings from their labor. Some of that is slowly changing in Tajikistan, for example, where the number of female heads of *dehkan* farms has increased from 7.8 percent in 2012 to about 19.2 percent in 2017. Furthermore, there is a low level of women's awareness of their land rights, especially in the rural areas. USAID/CA/Tajikistan's FtF activities have been working to increase their general knowledge on this topic through community volunteers, free legal aid centers and, at the national level, to support Tajikistan's Ministry of Education in rolling out courses on women's rights to land in secondary educational institutions across the country.

#### *Energy*

Limited information that exists about women in the energy sector shows that they are underrepresented in major energy companies overall, but especially in decision-making positions, in all four countries. Energy is traditionally considered a "male" sector, and many jobs in the sector require STEM background. Renewable energy sectors in all four countries are underdeveloped; however, worldwide, that has been a sector more welcoming to women's participation. Strengthening women's roles in renewable energy is key to achieving multiple SDGs.

#### *Water*

Similar to energy, the information on women in the water sector in the region is lacking. There has been some regional movement on gender in water, most recently resulting from the June 2018 Women Water Forum, which was a part of the "Water for Sustainable Development" Conference held in Dushanbe. The Forum brought together regional governments, donors including USAID and United Nations (UN) agencies, as well as international, regional, and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and water experts to discuss the importance of women's participation in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water and their inclusion in water governance at all levels. There are significant gender disparities in the water sector. Women are important actors in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and water usage, yet their voices are often ignored. As a result of the Women Water Forum,

each of the four countries developed Gender Roadmaps for the water sector, which are applied for water sector reforms at the national, regional, and global levels.

## **Democracy and Governance**

### *Civil Society*

The Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2018* report rates Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan one out of four on the question of freedom for NGOs, especially those engaged in human rights and governance-related work; Turkmenistan is rated zero out of four. According to respondents, common barriers to civil society organizations (CSOs) include issues with registration and similar administrative problems. While the three countries are all given the same rating, it is the observation of the GSIA team that the environment for LGBTI organizations seems to be more advanced in Kazakhstan than in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan's zero rating is undoubtedly based on the fact that there is no civil society there to speak of, since it is comprised of government NGOs (GONGOs). USAID/CA has been utilizing a regional approach to civil society strengthening, primarily through the Civil Society Development Organization (ARGO), an umbrella organization headquartered in Kazakhstan but with regional influence through its numerous member organizations across Central Asia. Besides restrictions imposed by the government in all four countries, civil society in the region is aging. Concerns were raised about the need to bring in more young people who do not seem to be interested in the sector due to low salaries.

### *Media*

In all four countries there are restrictions to media freedom. However, media has been identified by many respondents in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as an important tool for tackling gender and other stereotypes, as well as for being a voice in countering violence extremism. Even in Turkmenistan, where there is no freedom of media to speak of, working with the Government to promote messages of gender equality and social inclusion is a viable option, especially since it is keen to meet its SDG goals. Progressive young bloggers, YouTubers, Instagrammers, and other influencers who spread positive messages in Russian and local languages can help with developing an inclusive environment. Local media platforms such as NeMolchi and Tajik Mama not only empower women by providing a space for them to voice their opinions, but also demonstrate the power of grass-roots movements.

### *Justice and Governance*

In all four countries, access to justice is limited for women, people with disabilities, LGBTI individuals, as well as for poor and rural people. Research in Kazakhstan found that social norms (especially those shaming GBV victims), lack of women's resources and legal literacy, and low capacity and knowledge of the justice system employees are key obstacles to women's access to justice. An example of an improved access to justice can be found in Uzbekistan's e-governance and e-court systems, which creates new opportunities for dialogue between the Government and the population. In addition, free legal aid centers, often supported by USAID, increase access to justice to vulnerable groups. In governance, women's participation is low, ranging from a high of approximately 27 percent of women in Parliament in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, to a low of 16 percent in Uzbekistan. The absence of female decision-makers at the policy level means that women's perspectives and unique needs are not taken into account, which is a problem considering that women make up approximately 50 percent of the population.

### *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)*

The Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Network for Central Asia links government representatives, civil society groups, academia, international experts, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to build the region's resilience and cooperation. The involved parties share research, evidence, and data to assess and respond to drivers of radicalization, and to understand approaches and good practices for CVE. Not until recently has research started looking into women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization. In fact, women are still often thought of only as victims, and rarely as active recruiters and supporters of radical extremism.

### *Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP)*

Worldwide, children, women, and families are making up an increasing share of migrants, with the male share at 52 percent and female at 48 percent. Both male and female migrants from Central Asia are

vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, whether they migrate across the border or domestically. Due to gender-based discrimination in migration policies, which view migrant women primarily through a lens of helpless victims rather than economically empowered individuals, female migrants often end up in informal employment, especially in care and domestic work, which perpetuate gender stereotypes about “women’s work” and offer minimal, if any, labor protection. This, along with being in irregular migratory channels, increases women’s exposure to human rights violations, GBV, early marriage, and trafficking. Men are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in the construction sector.

## **Social Sector Improvements (Health and Education)**

### *Education*

Currently, USAID/CA’s basic education programming is active only in Tajikistan; however, there are plans to expand to Uzbekistan. Across all four countries, basic education is free and generally accessible to all, with the exception of children with disabilities who must attend separate schools of lower quality or have home visits by tutors. A significant issue in higher education for all four countries is gender segregation, where women are concentrated in certain areas of study, which generally leads to lower paid jobs, while men can be found in the fields of study with projected higher earnings. Another challenge is access to higher education institutions, especially in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

### *TB and HIV*

The 2018 Global Tuberculosis Report of the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the TB burden at an incidence rate of 66 per 100,000 for Kazakhstan, 85 for Tajikistan, and 73 for Uzbekistan. TB rates are declining in the region; the highest annual rates of decline between 2007 and 2017 were in Kazakhstan (-9.4 percent) and Tajikistan (-7.4 percent). At the same time, declining TB rates mean poor TB surveillance and discovery of new cases. Key populations at risk for contracting TB are migrants and prison populations. Stigma and many stereotypes surround tuberculosis in the region, partially due to historical isolation of TB patients in special hospitals and lack of public information about its causes and treatments. Across all four countries, the Governments have not put enough efforts to raise awareness on TB, how it is contracted, what the treatment entails, and what the consequences are of stopping it. The TB epidemic places a major burden on countries’ already strained health care systems and its economic development. Multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) poses a growing threat with the potential to spread across the region and beyond.

In 2018, the estimated HIV prevalence for individuals aged 15-49 was 0.2 percent for Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The estimated number of people of all ages living with HIV was 26,000 for Kazakhstan, 13,000 for Tajikistan, and 52,000 for Uzbekistan. The key at risk populations for HIV infections in the region are people who inject drugs (PWID), sex workers, MSM, the prison population, young people, and women. People living with HIV often experience stigma and discrimination, and frequently hide their positive status from their communities. In Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, there is legal discrimination against people with HIV that prevents them from activities such as adopting a child or serving in the military.

## **MAIN FINDINGS: MISSION OPERATIONAL**

Generally, the Mission’s staff report willingness to integrate gender and social inclusion into programming, but a need was expressed for further training and support. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan offices seem to be most in need of opportunities to engage with gender and social inclusion activities internally within their own offices. This is partially reflected in the fact that neither of those two offices has a dedicated Gender Adviser, as Tajikistan and Kazakhstan do. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan only have gender points of contact (PoCs) who do not have any gender-related duties written into their job descriptions. Perhaps due to the lack of capacity at these two country offices, neither office has an internal or cross-agency gender working group, although the PoCs are members of the Mission Inclusive Development Working Group, which includes members from all four country offices. In Tajikistan, USAID is a member of the United States (U.S.) Embassy’s Inter-Agency Gender Working Group, whose other members include the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), and the Public Affairs and PoliCon sections of the U.S. Embassy. Both local and American staff described cultural gender norms as difficult to challenge. In addition, for areas which are perceived as very technical (e.g., energy and water) the staff find it difficult to identify specific gender barriers in their programs. USAID Mission staff are not always interested in gender and social inclusion. Sometimes, these concepts are only viewed as additional work,

without fully understanding how they contribute to better outcomes. In the case of USAID/CA, that does not appear to be the case and the staff genuinely appear to be interested in promoting and implementing these values.

## **OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations for USAID/CA are divided into three sections: strategic, sector-specific, and Mission operational.

### **Strategic Recommendations**

- Whenever possible, collaborate with organizations and networks working on women's empowerment and gender equality; support events that promote female participation and decision-making across sectors.
- Ensure that each activity's gender components are in line with the USAID gender equality framework, as well as with the national priorities and government policies for gender equality and women's empowerment in each of the countries, and their SDG goals and targets.
- Continuously showcase and promote gender and social inclusion best practices and lessons learned among the implementing partners (IPs), activity stakeholders, and other relevant audiences.
- Include evidence-based interventions aimed at addressing gender stereotypes in all USAID/CA programming.
- Recognize that women are not a monolithic group, but rather represent a plethora of differences and are often subjects of intersectional discrimination. In addition to discrimination based on sex, they experience discrimination on disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, social and economic status, marital status, health status, etc.
- Strengthen programming and coordinate advocacy efforts on GBV across sectors with other donors.
- Include target beneficiary groups—especially disadvantaged groups, such as youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTI people—in meaningful engagement in decision-making and program design. Be responsive in listening and responding to their needs rather than trying to fit them within an already envisioned and inflexible program.
- For all programming that is aimed at empowering young women, ensure that onsite childcare is provided so that women are able to fully participate in program activities without having to take care of their children at the same time.
- Include communications components in all USAID/CA programs, so that they are well equipped to expertly explain to the external stakeholders how each program is addressing gender gaps and challenging gender stereotypes in a sustained way that is beneficial to the host country. These components can include strengthening social media engagement, creating relevant and engaging content focusing on existing gender stereotypes and their social impact, and supporting relevant influencers.
- Always promote gender and social inclusion elements in events, conferences, meetings with government officials, and USAID/CA senior staff speeches, regardless of the topic. This should be done by: 1) providing U.S. and international, regional, and national examples of how women contribute to society in a relevant sector; and 2) emphasizing that gender equality and social inclusion are guiding values for the United States Government (USG) and USAID in engagement with host country governments.
- For all programming involving people with disabilities, include transportation costs and ensure that program materials and venues are accessible for people with different types of disabilities.
- Support awareness-raising campaigns about GBV, sexual harassment, disability, HIV, TB, etc., continuously throughout the year for the campaigns to be more effective, rather than only in conjunction with events/dates such as International Women's Day, 16 days of activism against GBV, or International Day of Persons with Disabilities, when they are competing for attention with similar campaigns supported by other donors, NGOs, and the Government.
- Cultivate and build on gender and social inclusion connections and linkages between USAID/CA activities in different sectors, in order to enable cross-activity and cross-sectoral collaboration, leading to a more holistic approach.

- Support collection of sex disaggregated data as a basis for more evidence-based decision-making by investing in capacity-building of National Statistical Offices, where possible, in collaboration with other donors.
- Always participate in any gender and social inclusion working groups across sectors that involve other donors, CSOs, and governments to learn about what others are doing on this front, to find partners for future activities, and to stay a relevant player in this space.

## **Sectoral Recommendations**

### Economic Growth

#### *Investment in Trade and Markets*

- Explore ways to support remote (home-based) job opportunities for young people, young home-based mothers, and people with disabilities.
- Support country governments to improve the existing environment for women in the formal work force, including parental leave, flexible work hours, equal wages, sexual harassment, childcare support, and equal opportunities for professional advancement.
- Employ a holistic approach to supporting female entrepreneurs, inclusive of a whole range of services, such as self-esteem courses, provision of aid with taxes, marketing, networking, working with husbands and in-laws to secure their support, etc.
- Support women in non-traditional and marketable fields to challenge the status quo of gender occupational segregation, targeting rural women, victims of domestic violence and trafficking, and women with disabilities. At the basic activity level, this means providing options to women that go beyond canning, jam making, baking, and sewing.
- Support studies on women's economic empowerment in CA region. Women's economic empowerment entails not only access to economic opportunities, but also control over the earnings. While access is frequently addressed in research and studies, the control is not.

#### *Energy*

- Support studies on women's participation in the renewable and conventional energy sectors in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan that propose solutions for challenging gender stereotypes in the sector.
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at energy sector organizations regionally. An example of a very successful USG program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities (<https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>).
- Support regional events and networks of women in energy.

#### *Water*

- Promote women's leadership and participation in IWRM.
- Support regional events and networks of women in IWRM.
- Provide scholarships for women to study IWRM abroad.

## Democracy and Governance

### *Civil Society*

- Use local and Central Asia trainers to build the capacity of civil society groups, ensuring that they represent diverse backgrounds, where possible and appropriate (e.g., people with disabilities).
- Provide tailored and accessible capacity-building support to disability and LGBTI NGOs.
- Work with LGBTI groups from the human rights and civil society angle rather than the health angle, where possible (currently Kazakhstan); invest in capacity-building of LGBTI organizations elsewhere so they are ready to engage at the civil society level.
- Develop relationships with LGBTI groups that are willing to engage (Kazakhstan and Tajikistan), taking into account existing stigma and lack of sensitivity that may exist in USAID staff members.
- Explore ways of funding LGBTI groups without registration and support the efforts of those who choose to be registered.
- Support the network of CA CSOs to share regional experiences and build regional knowledge on addressing gender stereotypes and obstacles to gender equality.
- Develop strategies with influential CSOs such as ARGO to attract and recruit more young people into the civil society sector.

### *Media*

- Invest in capacity-building of progressive female journalists in the region; due to governmental restrictions on free media, there is a “brain drain” problem, where many male journalists are going abroad. Due to culturally sanctioned women’s more restricted mobility, they are more likely to stay in the country.
- Provide support to regional online platforms that promote gender equality, women’s empowerment, and human rights, such as NeMolchi.
- Engage with and support existing online youth communities to raise awareness and educate on gender stereotypes, social stigma, risks associated with migration, CVE, TB/HIV/sexually transmitted infections (STIs), etc.

### *Justice and Governance*

- Invest efforts in implementation of the CRPD in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and ratification in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- Support changing governments’ approaches to disability from “medical” to “social empowerment.”
- Support strengthening processes for reporting GBV cases by capacity-building of intake law enforcement and health care professionals.

### *CVE*

- Include a CVE component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking. Migrants are one of the most susceptible groups to CVE. Any service provision activity aimed at this group and their families should also discuss the dangers of CVE, ways to identify if they are being recruited, and tips for how to protect themselves.
- Support regional CVE-related events that promote women and youth as active change agents.

### *C-TIP*

- Continue to support provision of information services for labor migrants and their families based on their needs.
- Support regional governmental initiatives on migration.

## Social Sector Improvements (Education and Health)

### *Health (HIV and TB)*

- Continue supporting awareness raising and education on preventing stigmatization of people with HIV and TB targeting the general public.
- Use existing program opportunities to address stigma and gender barriers associated with TB and HIV among medical professionals. For TB, this can be accomplished via information campaigns that

dispel myths about TB that negatively affect women and provide further insights into economic and social benefits of completing TB treatment.

- Support education of health care professionals in interacting with HIV+ vulnerable populations. Health care professionals lack skills on how to properly service vulnerable populations such as MSM, PWID, and pregnant women who are HIV positive.

#### *Basic Education*

- Support programs in primary schools that challenge gender stereotypes that include students, teachers, parents, and communities.
- Support inclusive education in primary schools.
- Collaborate with NGOs and high-tech companies who produce/distribute special equipment/devices to help visually and hearing-impaired children.
- Work with the Ministry of Education and its departments to develop and include a module on inclusive education into pedagogical colleges and universities curricula for pre-service students.

#### **Mission Operational**

- Support training of Agreement Officer Representatives (AORs)/Contract Officer Representatives (CORs) on gender and social inclusion in their respective sectors. If staff receive scholarships from USAID/Washington to attend training out of the country, allow them to go even if they have already fulfilled their annual training quota. Gender capacity-building of USAID staff should be viewed as a necessity and a long-term investment.
- Engage with the IPs regularly to share with them the latest updates on gender and social inclusion at USAID and invite them to relevant capacity-building events.
- Ensure that AORs/CORs are aware of their responsibilities regarding gender integration as outlined in Automated Directives System (ADS) 205.
- Provide relevant gender and social inclusion training for gender PoCs in their sectors.
- Ensure that every cooperative agreement and contract has a requirement for a gender analysis to be conducted in the first three months following project start-up. Since January 2019, according to the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act, it is mandatory to conduct activity level gender analyses, and all USAID mechanisms are required to comply.
- Invite USAID gender and social inclusion experts to conduct a two-day inclusive development training for all staff and IPs.
- Build capacity of the Mission's LGBTI Coordinator. LGBTI issues are sensitive, and knowledge building regarding safety, security, and confidentiality when in contact with LGBTI groups, as well as being aware of regional trends, issues, and usage of appropriate language are all required.
- Ensure that all projects and activities include USAID gender goals and customized gender-sensitive indicators in their Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plans to support their capacity to measure progress on addressing gender gaps.
- For gender PoCs, at least 10 to 15 percent of their position descriptions should be related to their gender inclusion work. (Efforts are underway to achieve this goal.)



# 1.0 GSIA BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The United States Agency for International Development in Central Asia (USAID/CA) Mission is currently in the process of developing its new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCS). The ME&A analysis team has been tasked to conduct a Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA), which will inform the Mission’s new RDCS, Development Objectives (DOs), and Intermediate Results (IRs). The GSIA Statement of Work is in Annex I.

The GSIA objectives are to:

- Help USAID/CA understand and explain macro-level challenges between males and females that exist within and between four countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).
- Identify how gender norms and power relations may influence achievement of the Mission’s specific objectives in each context (e.g., country, geographic, cultural, institutional, economic, etc.).
- Explore issues related to youth; people with disabilities; religious and ethnic minorities;<sup>2</sup> and, where permissible, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons.

The GSIA will aim to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Identify gender and social inclusion gaps at the RDCS, DO, and IR levels, and provide recommendations for USAID/CA on how to close them.
2. Enable the RDCS to explicitly discuss how it will contribute to the three outcomes specified in the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GEFE) Policy:
  - Reductions in gaps between males and females in access to/control over economic, political, and social resources. (Outcome 1)
  - Reductions in the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV). (Outcome 2)
  - Reductions in constraints that prevent women and girls from leading, participating fully in, and influencing decisions in their societies. (Outcome 3)
3. Provide illustrative performance and context indicators that track progress in closing identified gender and social inclusion gaps or achieving female empowerment objectives as part of the Results Framework Indicators. (Annex 2)

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this GSIA consisted of collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, described in more detail below.

#### 2.1.1 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The qualitative data collection was conducted through document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a site visit.

---

<sup>2</sup> Religious and ethnic minorities were generally not mentioned as a specific area of concern by the stakeholders, apart from select comments related to Fergana Valley. The analysis therefore did not include a strong focus on ethnic and religious minorities.

## a) Document Review

The documents reviewed helped the GSIA team to document how, and to what extent, gender disparities or other social markers are manifested regionally, and in the four countries specifically, within relevant USAID/CA focus sectors. Categories of reviewed documents included: USAID guidance on gender and social inclusion; USAID/CA-authored documents; studies and assessments conducted by donors, academia, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); host country government reports, legislation, surveys and national statistics documents; and scholarly articles on youth, gender, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI. The full list of reviewed documents is presented in Annex 3. In addition, each of the four country reports (Annexes 4, 5, 6, and 7) contains its own bibliography annex.

## b) Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Site Visits

**Table 1: Summary of KIIs, FGDs, and Site Visits**

Country	Fieldwork Dates	No. of Interviews
Kazakhstan	July 1-5	23 KIIs, 1 FGD
Tajikistan	July 15-19	16 KIIs, 2 FGDs, 1 site visit (1 KII and 2 FGDs)
Turkmenistan (phone/Skype and questionnaire)	July 22-23	8 KIIs
Uzbekistan	July 8-12	18 KIIs, 1 FGD

### Key Informant Interviews

Key informants, for the purpose of this GSIA, are individuals knowledgeable about gender and social inclusion issues in the region broadly, and/or each of the four countries specifically. The list of informants was developed together by USAID/CA and the GSIA team. Annex 8 provides the list of completed interviews. KIIs were conducted using a semi-structured interview tool (Annex 9), which allowed the interviewer to guide the conversation in a manner that systematically gathers needed information while allowing informants to add additional relevant information. This approach enabled the team to probe at individual level and generate more detailed information. Each KII lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. In most cases, the interviews were conducted by all four team members; however, in cases where the interviews had to be scheduled simultaneously, the team split up to accommodate scheduling demands. In select instances, the team members were accompanied by up to three USAID/CA staff members.

### Focus Group Discussions

The GSIA conducted a total of six FGDs with: 1) the implementing partners (IPs) in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (2);<sup>3</sup> 2) Inclusive Development Working Group (IDWG) in Kazakhstan and Embassy Dushanbe Gender Working Group (2);<sup>4</sup> and 3) Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity's (TAWA) female beneficiaries during the team's visit to Tajikistan (2).<sup>5</sup> Each FGD lasted between 1 and 2.5 hours.

### Site Visit

In Tajikistan, the GSIA team travelled to Bokhtar, Khatlon district where the TAWA project is active. Bokhtar is one of the poorest and most conservative regions of the country. While there, the team conducted a KII with a local NGO, and held two FGDs with project beneficiaries, as detailed above.

Quantitative data were analyzed by identifying specific themes and sub-themes for each country, across sectors and categories of social inclusion. Each country's data were then compared and contrasted with each other to arrive at regional commonalities and differences.

## 2.1.2 Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

### GSIA Survey

<sup>3</sup> Initially, sector-based FGDs were planned, totaling no more than six persons per FGD; however, considering time constraints, both FGDs had a mix of sectors and more than six participants.

<sup>4</sup> In both cases, due to vacation/holidays, not all members were able to participate.

<sup>5</sup> The women answered questions and shared with the team healthy recipes they learned how to make with TAWA's assistance, with the vegetables they grew, such as eggplant and broccoli (new to the region).

Primary quantitative data resulted from the GSIA survey, which gauged the respondents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and social inclusion integration. The survey was administered online via SurveyMonkey. USAID/CA provided the list of survey takers; however, the survey was anonymous. The survey was administered to 77 USAID/CA staff and IPs. Forty-seven (47) individuals took the survey; 26 completed it, and 21 completed it only partially. SurveyMonkey software was used to analyze the survey data. Survey analysis is presented in Annex 10.

## 2.2 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations to data collection may have affected the analysis' findings and outcomes.

- **Potential bias in respondent selection:** While the GSIA team identified some respondents, the majority were identified by USAID/CA, on a purposive rather than random basis. The respondents were in some way familiar or connected with USAID's work in the four countries as IPs, partners, etc.
- **Lack of data:** Data that are particularly missing are those on GBV. In Uzbekistan, lack of data is attributed to the Government's reluctance to release data that do not look "good," or that is not showing progress in achieving certain goals and objectives, including compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Turkmenistan, the data are largely absent because they are controlled by the Government, which does not support national-level data collection activities such as a Demographic and Health Survey or a census.
- **Presence of USAID/CA staff during select interviews:** The team noted that presence of USAID staff during select interviews might have influenced the types of answers provided by the respondents, especially by the IPs. Although the team made it clear that the purpose of the interviews was not to evaluate their activities, the IPs would often, if USAID staff were present, focus on presenting their project's gender-related accomplishments, rather than on providing more tailored answers to the questions asked. Without the presence of USAID staff, the respondents seemed more relaxed, and the conversations were able to flow in a more informal manner.
- **Unavailability of informants:** Due to holidays, many USAID/CA staff were away. In addition, many Government officials did not respond to team's request for interviews, or they were not able to be reached, especially in Kazakhstan. As a result, the team did not interview any government officials in Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan.

# 3.0 GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Two gender and social inclusion frameworks should be considered in development of USAID/CA RDCCS: 1) USAID gender equality and social inclusion framework, led by the GEFE policy; and 2) international gender equality and social inclusion framework which the Governments of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan adhere to, led by the SDGs. All four countries are keen on reaching the SDGs. The most important gender equality international treaty is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As State Parties who have ratified it, all four countries have attempted to base their own national gender equality legislation on this treaty.

## 3.1 USAID FRAMEWORK

It should be mentioned that USAID gender equality framework is in alignment with the Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR), which intends to strengthen the capacity and commitment of institutions and governments, as well as priority populations and individuals, as they transition to locally led and sustained development. USAID's Policy Framework aims to end the need for foreign assistance by partnering with countries along their J2SR, via a new Agency-wide approach to development and humanitarian assistance: fostering self-reliance. Undoubtedly, for developing countries to be self-reliant and no longer in need of foreign aid, ensuring equal opportunities in all spheres of life for all of their citizens is a necessity. Individual

J2SR Roadmaps include a country’s commitment to inclusive development as one of the metrics for achieving self-reliance. Table 2 summarizes how each of the four countries fares in that aspect.

**Table 2: Inclusive Development Commitments on J2SR<sup>6</sup>**

Inclusive Development Commitment (0-1 score, least to most advanced globally)	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
Social Group Equality	0.80	0.85	0.35	0.50
Economic Gender Gap	0.76	0.71	n/a	0.80

Out of the four countries, Turkmenistan has the furthest to go in achieving their inclusive development commitment, while Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have advanced significantly.

Table 3 summarizes key policies and strategies that make up USAID’s gender and social inclusion framework for RDCS development.

**Table 3: USAID Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework**

Policy/Strategy	Key Messages
<b>Gender Equality and Female Empowerment</b>	
USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012)	Three outcomes specified in the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reductions in gaps between males and females in access to/control over economic, political, and social resources;</li> <li>• Reductions in the prevalence of GBV; and</li> <li>• Reductions in constraints that prevent women and girls from leading, participating fully in, and influencing decisions in their societies.</li> </ul>
Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment (WEEE) Act (2018)	The development cooperation policy of the United States (U.S.) aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefit from economic, social, political, and cultural resources; wealth; opportunities; and services;</li> <li>• Strive to eliminate GBV and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities through efforts to develop standards and capacity to reduce GBV in the workplace and other places where women conduct work;</li> <li>• Support activities that secure private property rights and land tenure for women in developing countries; and</li> <li>• Increase the capability of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, assume leadership roles, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.</li> </ul>
U.S. Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk from Violent Extremism and Conflict (2019)	Strategy objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support women as effective leaders and participants in preventing and responding to terrorist radicalization;</li> <li>• Promote and protect the rights, safety, and inclusion of women and girls;</li> <li>• Counter women’s roles in terrorism; and</li> <li>• Internal capacity building and coordination.</li> </ul>
U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (2019)	There are four lines of effort which will help improve women’s empowerment and equality in one or more of the conflict phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line of effort 1: Seek and support the preparation and meaningful participation of women around the world in decision-making processes related to conflict and crises;</li> <li>• Line of effort 2: Promote the protection of women and girls’ human rights; access to humanitarian assistance; and safety from violence, abuse, and exploitation around the world;</li> <li>• Line of effort 3: Adjust United States international programs to improve outcomes in equality for, and the empowerment of women; and</li> <li>• Line of effort 4: Encourage partner governments to adopt policies, plans, and capacity to improve the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace and security and decision-making institutions.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps, <https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/>

Policy/Strategy	Key Messages
U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (2016)	<p>The Strategy outlines four core objectives in the United States Government’s (USG) commitment to prevent and respond to GBV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalize coordination of GBV prevention and response efforts among USG departments and agencies and with other stakeholders;</li> <li>• Integrate GBV prevention and response efforts into existing USG work;</li> <li>• Collect, analyze, and use data and research to enhance the USG’s GBV prevention and response efforts; and</li> <li>• Expand USG programming that addresses GBV.</li> </ul>
U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls (2016)	<p>This strategy sets forth the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance girls’ access to quality education in safe environments;</li> <li>• Provide economic opportunities and incentives for girls and their families; and</li> <li>• Empower girls with information, skills, services, and support.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth</b>	
Youth in Development Policy (2012)	<p>Three expected outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are better able to access economic and social opportunities, share in economic growth, live healthy lives, and contribute to household, community, and national wellbeing.</li> <li>• Youth fully participate in democratic and development processes, play active roles in peacebuilding and civil society, and are less involved in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations.</li> <li>• Youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by local and national institutions, with more robust and youth friendly policies.</li> </ul>
<b>LGBTI</b>	
LGBT Vision for Action (2014)	<p>USAID will prioritize the following “next steps” to ensure that its development work and workplace elevate LGBT equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity for inclusive development within USAID.</li> <li>• Apply selectivity and focus to integration efforts.</li> <li>• Build capacity of local LGBT organizations in developing countries.</li> <li>• Hold ourselves accountable for upholding non-discrimination requirements.</li> <li>• Expand a learning agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>People with Disabilities</b>	
Disability Policy (1997)	<p>Policy objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance U.S. foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities in USAID policy, country, and sector strategies; activity designs; and implementation;</li> <li>• Increase awareness of disability issues within USAID programs and in host countries;</li> <li>• Engage other USG agencies, host-country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations, and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and</li> <li>• Support international advocacy for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>

**3.2 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity, and is measured by 17 SDGs, including SDG 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. In July 2019, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan submitted their Voluntary National Reviews at the United Nations (UN) High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York. The reviews showcase the countries’ self-assessments of their progress in achieving SDGs. Each country identified their own shortcomings in the process. On the gender front, Kazakhstan identified three steps to help them achieve SDG 5: 1) improve legislation to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women in family relations, protection of motherhood and childhood, increasing the responsibility of parents for the upbringing of children, combatting all forms of discrimination and GBV; 2) strengthen gender equality through state regulation and the introduction of gender impact assessment in the system of state and budget planning; and 3) ensure equal access of men and women to the resources necessary for

entrepreneurship.<sup>7</sup> Turkmenistan did not specifically focus on SDG 5, but it noted that the level of SDG integration for this particular SDG is at 67 percent, without identifying specific gaps.

All four countries are State Parties to CEDAW, which means that CEDAW articles should be translated into their domestic policy and legal frameworks, advancing women’s empowerment and gender equality as a national goal. CEDAW Article 5 (a) is particularly relevant here as it asks State Parties “[t]o modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving **the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.**”

Another important treaty which is a part of this framework is the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Only Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have ratified this treaty, which means that they are obligated to implement it by adapting it to their national legislation.

## 4.0 REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

This section presents the regional overview of gender and social inclusion through the framework of five domains of gender analysis. In addition, Table 4 below shows how the countries rank in several international equality indices. The key takeaways are: 1) Kazakhstan scores the highest on various aspects of the gender equality spectrum than the other three countries; and 2) absence of data that are required to calculate these complex indices is concerning in the case of Turkmenistan, making it difficult to understand and analyze actual gender gaps there.

**Table 4: International Gender Equality Indices Rankings for Four Countries**

Indicator	Kazakhstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Gender Development Index (GDI) (2018) <sup>8</sup>	1.007 – Group 1 – high achievement	0.933 (Group 3 – medium equality)	n/a	0.945 (Group 3 – medium equality)
UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2018) <sup>9</sup>	0.197 (KZ scores low on Parliamentary seats and labor market participation)	0.317	n/a	0.274
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (2019) <sup>10</sup>	Low discrimination (22%)	Medium discrimination (32%)	n/a	n/a
World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (2018) (GGGI) <sup>11</sup>	0.712 (60/149) (KZ scores low on economic participation and political empowerment)	0.638 (123/149)	n/a	n/a
Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index (2019) <sup>12</sup>	71.1 (Fair) (45/129)	64.8 (Poor) (72/129)	n/a	n/a

<sup>7</sup> Kazakhstan Voluntary National Review, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Male-female achievement ratio in health; education; and command over economic resources. (Group 1 – high equality; group 2 – medium-high equality; group 3 – medium equality; group 4 – medium-low equality; group 5 countries – low equality.)

<sup>9</sup> Five indicators: maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rate, seats in the national Parliament, population with at least secondary education, and labor force participation. Measurement is between 0 and 1. The higher the GII value, the more disparities between females and males.

<sup>10</sup> Five dimensions: 1) discriminatory family code, 2) restricted physical integrity, 3) son bias, 4) restricted resources and assets, and 5) restricted civil liberties. Countries are ranked as very low, low, medium, high, or very high. Zero (0) percent for no discrimination to 100 percent for very high discrimination.

<sup>11</sup> Measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment across 149 countries. Scale 0 to 1.

<sup>12</sup> The state of gender equality across 129 countries. The Index features 51 indicators across 14 of the 17 SDGs and 51 targets linked to gender issues. The Index ranks countries on a score of 0 to 100 (Excellent: 90 and above; Good: 80-89; Fair: 70-79; Poor: 60-69; Very poor: 59 and below).



## 4.1 LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

The Constitutions of all four countries guarantee equality of men and women. In addition, all countries but Uzbekistan have separate gender equality laws. For example, Kazakhstan's *2009 Law of State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* establishes the legal principle of equal rights by identifying spheres in which gender discrimination is prohibited—the civil service, the labor market, health care, education, and the family. Similarly, Tajikistan has the *2005 Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women*, and Turkmenistan the *2015 Law on State Guarantees of Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*. Uzbekistan is reportedly about to adopt its Gender Equality Law in September 2019. In addition, all countries but Uzbekistan have gender equality-related policies, strategies, or national action plans—Kazakhstan has the *Concept on Family and Gender Policy 2030*; Turkmenistan the *National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2015-2020)*, and Tajikistan the *National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2011-2020*. Gender equality national laws and policies have largely been created as a result of the countries having ratified CEDAW, or in their efforts to nationalize SDGs. A concern that needs to be raised in regard to the existing gender equality policies in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, in particular, is the fact that gender dynamics and women's roles are presented through the lens of the family. This approach, which takes away women's standing as independent individuals with agency and rights, as endorsed by the CEDAW and SDGs.

All four countries have a gender mainstreaming mechanism, *i.e.*, agencies leading gender mainstreaming processes at the government level. However, none of these entities are at the level of a Ministry, and none have executive powers. The National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family, and Demographic Policy in Kazakhstan, The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan, and the Women's Union in Turkmenistan all play a multi-functional role. These roles may include providing advice to the President, awarding grants and housing to vulnerable groups, fielding calls or visits from women on numerous problems they may be facing, and supervising and running domestic violence shelters and hotlines. Therefore, these entities are more involved with service provision than decision-making at the policy level, and as such can only provide a piecemeal approach to addressing gender inequality, which is not effective nor sustainable. The fact that none of the four governments have made any attempts to elevate the status of these agencies shows the lack of political will to prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment. In Uzbekistan, with the new political changes and seemingly more open political environment, there have been reports of creating a Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Out of four countries, only Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have GBV/domestic violence (DV)<sup>13</sup> legislation. Uzbekistan is reportedly due to adopt its DV law in September 2019.<sup>14</sup> There is a regional tendency or a preference, mostly driven by cultural norms and stigma, to keep this issue silent and ignore it, and consider it a private family matter. As a result, despite the existing DV laws in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, their enforcement is extremely weak. The justice systems fail in prosecution of perpetrators (via Criminal Code), in investing in capacity of its law enforcement and courts, and in providing access to hotlines and safe shelters and opportunities for income generation for victims. NGOs and donors are the main driving force in ensuring functioning of shelters, despite lack of capacity, and frequent government interference.

All four countries have developed legislation that protects people with disabilities. However, its implementation is weak. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are the only two countries in Central Asia that did not ratify CRPD; however, Tajikistan is scheduled to ratify in 2021. Despite progressive disability legislation, disability is still viewed from a medical rather than social empowerment perspective. This means that people with disabilities are officially considered as medical cases that need rehabilitation and, ultimately, cure. People with disabilities make up 15 percent of the total world population, and research shows that less developed countries have the highest prevalence of disability. Interestingly, Uzbekistan has claimed that the prevalence of disability there has decreased from 3 percent in 2007 to less than 2 percent in

---

<sup>13</sup> GBV and DV are used interchangeably for the purpose of this report.

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the 2009/2010 USAID/CA gender analysis recommended for UZ to adopt GBV legislation. The fact that ten years later, this is still a pending issue shows how long it can take for positive changes to take place.

2017.<sup>15</sup> These percentages seem incredibly low to begin with, but what is even more concerning is the fact that “curing” people from disability is the ultimate goal. In reality, any decrease in prevalence is more likely a result of individuals being officially categorized as persons with a less severe disability status, rather than being “cured.” In addition, all four countries have failed on the provision of access to basic infrastructure<sup>16</sup> and education for people with disabilities. Although there have been some efforts towards inclusive education, largely children with disabilities are kept away from the mainstream education, which gravely affects their life opportunities and is against CRPD principles.<sup>17</sup> None of the four countries provide legal protection and guarantee of equal rights for LGBTI individuals. In fact, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, same sex conduct between men is criminalized.

## 4.2 CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Traditional norms and beliefs that guide gender dynamics, roles and relationships in the four Central Asian countries are very similar to each other but also to the rest of the world. Despite fairly progressive outlook and practical policies on gender equality promoted and implemented by the former Soviet Union for decades, these cultural norms, many of which are harmful to women and girls, and perpetuate gender inequality, managed to survive, and have even become more prominent since independence. Norms about early marriage, bride kidnapping, and polygamy are still alive and well, albeit in rural and more conservative areas of the region. However, there are reports of polygamy practiced in Kazakhstan among educated men of high economic standing. Reportedly, it is not unusual for civil servants who are transferred from Almaty to Nur Sultan and leave their families behind, to take on a second younger wife (*tokal*) in Nur Sultan.

Boys’ and girls’ life paths are generally laid out for them from early childhood based on gender stereotypes. Girls learn that they are second class citizens early on; they help around the house with chores, while boys are allowed to play unsupervised. Girls know that their main goal in life should be to get married, have children, and be a wife. Boys’ main goal should be to be breadwinners of their family, which can be achieved in multiple ways. Families encourage their girls to study health or education, while boys are encouraged to study science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), information technology (IT), etc. This segregated approach is later translated into the labor market, where men and women remain in their accepted and socially prescribed “spheres of influence.” Moving between the spheres is not easy and is discouraged. Due to migration, where men leave to work abroad, gender dynamics within families are changing and women are forced to take on the breadwinner role, especially in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However, this is still viewed only as a temporary solution, to last until the men are back.

Perhaps one of the most damaging cultural perceptions is about GBV/DV, which is largely considered a private, family issue. This way of thinking discourages women from reporting the violence to law enforcement, and encourages them to turn to traditional justice channels, such as *mahallas* in Uzbekistan. Traditional channels promote reconciliation above everything, and in countries such as Uzbekistan, where divorce is considered a public scourge,<sup>18</sup> saving a marriage takes precedence over preventing physical, emotional, or economic abuse experienced by many women. For those women who manage to get divorced, gender stereotypes deem them to be second class citizens with “low morals.” Considering a very hard life that awaits a divorced woman, some see staying in an abusive relationship a lesser of two evils.

People with disabilities face multiple challenges based on how they are perceived by the society. Generally, they are considered as medical cases, unable to make their own decisions, obtain or keep a job, and contribute to society. Women with disabilities face additional layers of challenges based on their sex. They

---

<sup>15</sup> 2018 research conducted by the World Bank and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) found that people with disabilities make up 13.5 percent of the total Uzbek population. Interview with NGO Sharoit, July 9, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Casual observations made by the team in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan noted multiple examples of ramps for wheelchairs made at an incredibly high angle or of a slippery material (*i.e.*, marble), making them not usable by people in wheelchairs. Several examples of usable ramps were noted, but often they were surrounded by raised sidewalks, so the individual would have no place to go even after using the ramp.

<sup>17</sup> There are instances when children with disabilities benefit from special instructions, such as visually impaired children who require special equipment and books in Braille.

<sup>18</sup> The Uzbek government claims to have prevented 36,000 divorces from taking place last year.



have a more challenging time getting married than men with disabilities; and their reproductive rights and choices are often challenged by the medical professionals who encourage them not to get pregnant or to have an abortion, if they already are pregnant. This type of discriminatory and patronizing attitude is often the reason that women with disabilities avoid going to the doctors, even if they know they are pregnant, therefore risking their own health and that of their unborn child. While there are no sex disaggregated data on prevalence of disability in the four countries, worldwide, disability prevalence for women is 19 percent, compared with 12 percent for men; and, in low and middle-income countries, it is estimated that women make up to 75 percent of persons with disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

Negative cultural beliefs about LGBTI individuals are widespread in all four countries, although some respondents in Kazakhstan claim that the situation is improving, especially in Almaty and bigger urban centers. Generally, however, negative views easily thrive in an environment where there is no legal protection for this marginalized group. It is not uncommon that, due to social stigma and family pressure, men who have sex with men (MSM) marry a heterosexual woman, and continue having relationships with men, often unprotected, which contributes to transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), resulting in public health concerns. Social beliefs also support the stigma that is attached to people with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and HIV. Socially fabricated myths and stories surround these diseases, which make people's already difficult lives even more challenging to navigate. There is shame attached to both of these conditions, and people's immediate reaction is to hide them from their communities, for fear of rejection. Women who have TB as girls may have difficulty getting married. Migrants are one of the key groups to contract TB, and the responsibilities they need to live up to as breadwinners often win over their need to receive treatment, putting them and their families in further danger.

### **4.3 GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE**

Gender roles and responsibilities are a direct result of cultural beliefs and norms. While there are some differences between the four countries, and certainly between rural and urban populations, broadly speaking, girls are taught from an early age that their roles are to take care of the house, get married, have children, and take care of their children and husband. As such, the overwhelming majority of unpaid, and therefore less valued work, is performed by women. Even women who have full time jobs still perform the majority of household duties. Worldwide, on average, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men.<sup>20</sup> Data from 2006 show that in Uzbekistan, women spent almost three times as much time than their male counterparts on childcare.<sup>21</sup> However, in Kazakhstan, a positive trend has been noted, with men reportedly increasing their involvement with unpaid work. In 2010, women reported spending 17.1 percent, and men 7.7 percent of their time on unpaid home work. In 2018, women spent 12.8 percent of their time on unpaid domestic work, compared to men's 11.9 percent.<sup>22</sup> Often, the overwhelming responsibility women have for taking care of the home and children prevents them from working or starting their own business. In all four countries, there is an absence of women-friendly social protection network, with the biggest gap being affordable childcare options.

Gender roles prescribed by the society are also visible in gender segregation in education and labor market. Women are largely concentrated in education or health, where their main job is to educate or cure people, fitting the gender stereotype of a woman as a "nurturer." Similarly, women dominate in the service industry, fitting with their "natural" role to serve others. Men's roles as breadwinner require them to be in higher paid technical fields, such as STEM, IT, and also physical sectors such as construction, oil, gas, and energy. The sectors where physical strength is valued are usually not considered appropriate for women. Kazakhstan legally prohibits women from working in 25 occupational categories, including metalworking, mining, metallurgical works, and cement production, although informants shared that recently about a third of the banned jobs were taken off the list. While there is certainly an argument to

---

<sup>19</sup> Issue brief: Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/6/issue-brief-making-the-sdgs-count-for-women-and-girls-with-disabilities>, last accessed August 9, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2017/7/infographic-spotlight-on-sdg-5>, last accessed on August 9, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> ESCAP. Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries. 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2019.

be made about jobs that may be dangerous to one's health, it is not the government's place to impose such restrictions in a blanket way on women. Women are capable of making decisions on their own, including choosing to work a dangerous job.

#### **4.4 ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES**

In all four countries, despite existing laws on equality, there are limitations to women and other vulnerable groups' access to and control over certain assets and resources. A legacy that is lost in the post-Soviet world is free higher education. It can be argued that women and girls have been disproportionately affected by this loss. In an environment where there is a cost associated with education and financial means are limited, decisions, based on gender stereotypes, are made about which child gets the privilege of going to university. The reality is that the families are more likely to invest in the education of their sons, the future breadwinners of the family. The education needs and desires of daughters, whose main purpose is to get married and have children, are secondary. For young women who do manage to get a higher education, their chosen career paths are in the lower paying fields that will lead to lower paying jobs. A promising donor-led initiative in Tajikistan is addressing gender segregation in vocational education. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is currently supporting a program for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction, energy, welding, and jewelry making. The target is 2,260 women enrolled (so far, there are 700). Women are provided a stipend during the program and are linked with employment upon completion. ADB is also renovating dormitories within select vocational institutions so that they can house women.<sup>23</sup> The concept of gender disaggregation in the labor market, while it disadvantages women largely from a financial standpoint, is inherently unfair to both sexes as it prevents everyone from freely choosing a career path. Just as there are women who are interested in traditionally "men's" jobs, there are men interested in traditionally "women's" jobs.

Lack of free education also negatively affects other disadvantaged groups, including people in rural areas, and low-income people. Similarly, access to education is curtailed for people with disabilities who must attend special schools, which segregates them from the mainstream society, and further reinforces the idea of them as being different and "other." Furthermore, people with disabilities also find accessing the labor market a challenge. Due to generally lower levels of education, resulting from structural discrimination, they are often not hired. Legal quotas set up for hiring people with disabilities are not enforced or monitored.

The small and medium enterprise (SME) environment in all countries, except perhaps Kazakhstan, is unfriendly, and bureaucratic hurdles, tax issues, and corruption pose a challenge for all entrepreneurs. However, women are disadvantaged in additional ways. One of the most significant obstacles for women is their low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. Their entire lives they have been conditioned to think of themselves as second class citizens with no ability for business. Further, successful female entrepreneurs have shared that family support is key to their success. Therefore, lack of family support is a real challenge which men usually do not experience. Next, while both men and women have equal rights to property and land ownership in all four countries, cultural norms and expectations regulate how inheritance is approached. In Tajikistan, where USAID has been involved with work on land rights and ownership, women frequently give up their part of the inheritance to their brothers. Lack of any property in their own name means they cannot obtain business loans which require collateral.

Women are disadvantaged in access to justice, especially in regard to GBV/DV cases. In all four countries, justice systems have proven to be inefficient and generally failing the victims of GBV, often forcing them to go back to their abusive relationships, which reportedly can result in their death or suicide. The justice systems have also been unfriendly towards the LGBTI population who have reportedly experienced violence and extortion in the hands of law enforcement. In Turkmenistan, the law enforcement and medical personnel perform forced anal examinations on men and transgender individuals who are arrested on homosexuality-related charges, to find "proof" of homosexual conduct.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Interview with ADB, July 17, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Introduction: Putting the spotlight on Turkmenistan, <https://fpc.org.uk/introduction-putting-the-spotlight-on-turkmenistan/>, last accessed August 1, 2019.

Marginalized groups—people with TB and HIV (especially women), MSM, and the LGBTI population—experience obstacles in access to health care. LGBTI individuals report being discriminated against by the health care professionals. This points to both the cultural beliefs about these groups but also lack of governments’ investment in building capacity of the health care staff so they know how to appropriately interact with them. Migrants, who are a high-risk group for contracting TB, are also another group that has restricted access to health care, at least in Kazakhstan. Not receiving treatment due to inaccessibility or unaffordability is a public health threat.

Information is another area where access is limited for many. Generally speaking, all of the population in Turkmenistan has limited access to information due to Government restrictions, which include social media, Facebook, and Twitter. In other countries, cost and location play a big role in how people access information. In Kazakhstan, for example, 81.5 percent of total households have access to the Internet via mobile broadband connection; and 93.7 percent of men and 92.3 percent of women own mobile phones,<sup>25</sup> which makes it easier to access information. It should be noted that, even if people have free access to information, if they do not speak Russian, they are likely to get more limited, and often less gender-sensitive information in their local languages. In Kazakhstan, for example, the lack of LGBTI-positive information in the Kazakh language, helps perpetuate negative stereotypes about this population group. In general, however, across the region, gender does not seem to play as big of a factor in accessing information.

#### **4.5 PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING**

Patterns of power and decision-making are a product of cultural norms and beliefs about women’s abilities and roles. The general lack of interest from all four governments to challenge these concepts contributes to the lack of women as decision-makers in private and public spheres. At the household level, while women are household managers, men are the official decision-makers and breadwinners. Even in situations where the wives of migrants are the de facto heads of households, key family decisions are still being made by their husbands from abroad.

Men are the decision-makers at the government level. In all four countries, women’s representation in the Parliament is low. In Kazakhstan, women represent 27.6 percent of the members of the Lower House of the Parliament and make up 22.2 percent in local representative bodies.<sup>26</sup> In Turkmenistan, in 2016, women made up 27.42 percent of the deputies of the Mejlis.<sup>27</sup> In Tajikistan, in 2017, women constituted 21.1 percent of the members of the Majlis-i Milli (upper house) of the Majlis-i Oli.<sup>28</sup> Uzbekistan has the lowest representation of women in the Parliament, at 16 percent in 2017.<sup>29</sup> Women’s representation in Parliament is often used as one of the indicators of women’s empowerment. However, several respondents have shared that this metric may not be appropriate for the region. Women’s representation is largely dependent on the ruling party, and they are awarded high level positions for being party supporters. This means that their alliance may not necessarily lie with advocating for gender equality and women’s rights, but with the agenda that is being promoted by the ruling party.

## **5.0 FINDINGS BY SECTOR**

### **5.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH**

#### **5.1.1 Investment in Trade and Markets**

Across the region, women are underrepresented in the workforce and in SME ownership, and make less money than their male counterparts. Some select economic indicators include:

---

<sup>25</sup> Kazakhstan Voluntary National Review.

<sup>26</sup> Voluntary National Review (VNR).

<sup>27</sup> Turkmenistan Report to CEDAW Committee, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Six Periodic Review submitted by Tajikistan under the Article 18, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> ADB, Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment Update, 2018.

- **Workforce participation** (2018) is 65.4 percent (F) and 77.2 percent (M) in Kazakhstan; 45.6 percent (F) and 73 percent (M) in Tajikistan; 53.8 percent (F) and 78.2 percent (M) in Turkmenistan; and 53.8 percent (F) and 77.7 percent (M) in Uzbekistan.<sup>30</sup>
- The **Gender pay gap** (2015) is 34 percent in Kazakhstan;<sup>31</sup> 33 percent in Tajikistan;<sup>32</sup> and 36 percent among own-account workers and 30 percent for small business owners<sup>33</sup> in Turkmenistan.
- **SME ownership**: Forty-two (42) percent of economically active SMEs are women owned, but they are mostly micro and small businesses in Kazakhstan;<sup>34</sup> 9 percent of new business owners in 2017 were female in Tajikistan;<sup>35</sup> and in the first half of 2017, out of over 16,000 new small businesses, 42.3 percent were women-headed in Uzbekistan.<sup>36</sup>
- The **percentage of firms with majority female ownership** (2013) <sup>37</sup> is 16.4 percent in Kazakhstan, 8 percent in Tajikistan, and 7.9 percent in Uzbekistan.
- The **percentage of firms with a female top manager** (2013) <sup>38</sup> is 18.9 percent in Kazakhstan, 9.6 percent in Tajikistan, and 13.4 percent in Uzbekistan.

Due to cultural norms and gender roles and responsibilities, women are the primary caretakers of children and home; therefore, women have fewer opportunities for full time employment. Lack of robust social protection systems that would provide affordable or free childcare is a significant obstacle to their workforce participation. All four countries suffer from gender occupational segregation, gender pay gap, and horizontal segregation, as evidenced by the absence of women in higher paid, decision-making positions. For example, in Kazakhstan, women represent only about 28 percent of the directors of SMEs.<sup>39</sup>

The SME environment is more developed and easier to navigate in Kazakhstan than it is in the other three countries. Challenges specific to women's entry into the SME sector include lack of self-esteem and family support, and limited access to finance, often based on inability to obtain collateral for a loan. Loan collateral frequently includes property and, although legally men and women in all four countries have equal rights to property ownership and inheritance, traditional customary norms often preclude women from claiming these rights.

USAID/CA's support of agriculture and land rights sectors is mostly limited to Tajikistan, through the Feed the Future (FtF) activities, apart from the Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) project in Uzbekistan. In general, women as the majority of the agricultural workforce, provide free labor and rarely have control over earnings from their labor. Some of that is slowly changing. In Tajikistan, for example, the number of female heads of *dehkan* farms has increased from 7.8 percent in 2012 to about 19.2 percent in 2017.<sup>40</sup> Female-headed *dehkan* farms are usually smaller than men's, and heading the farm does not equal owning it; in fact, in 2017, women owned only 8.8 percent of *dehkan* farm lands.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, there is a low level of women's awareness of their land rights, especially in the rural areas. USAID/CA's FtF activities have been working to increase their general knowledge on this topic through community volunteers, free legal aid centers, and, at the national level, with Tajikistan's Ministry of Education to roll out courses on women's rights to land in secondary educational institutions across the country.

### 5.1.2 Energy

In general terms, information about women in energy in the region is very limited. This includes both information on women as users of power, as well as participants in power/energy delivery. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is currently undertaking a survey on "Women in the Energy

<sup>30</sup> ESCAP. Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries. 2018.

<sup>31</sup> ADB Gender Assessment.

<sup>32</sup> Draft Background Note. Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia Better Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> ESCAP. Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries. 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with EBRD, July 3, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Draft Background Note. Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia Better Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> ADB, Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment Update, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/exploretopics/gender>, last accessed August 10, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/exploretopics/gender>, last accessed August 10, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Kazakhstan VNR, 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Gender indicators in Dehkan Farms in Russian, Statistics Agency under the President of RT, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Gender indicators in Dehkan Farms in Russian, Statistics Agency under the President of RT, 2018.

Sector,” which will provide a baseline and look at barriers for women when entering and advancing within the sector. The limited information that exists shows that women are underrepresented in major energy companies overall, but especially in decision-making positions, in all four countries. Energy is traditionally considered a “male” sector, and many jobs in the sector require STEM background.

In Kazakhstan, women represent less than 5 percent of the workforce in major energy companies, and are mostly in low non-decision-making positions.<sup>42</sup> Less than 10 percent of the workforce of Barki Tojik, Tajikistan’s national power company, is female,<sup>43</sup> and at Uzbekenergo, the largest electricity provider in Uzbekistan, women constitute only 17 percent of the total workforce.<sup>44</sup> Turkmenenergo Corporation, Turkmenistan’s state power corporation, has the highest percentage of female employees of the four countries, at 41 percent, although the majority are in non-technical and support positions. Pamir Energy has a more gender balanced workforce in Tajikistan’s Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO).

The renewable energy sectors in all four countries are underdeveloped. Worldwide, the renewable energy sector has been welcoming to women’s participation, with work forces employing about 32 percent women, compared to 22 percent in the energy sector overall. An estimated number of jobs in renewables could increase from 10.3 million in 2017 to nearly 29 million in 2050.<sup>45</sup> Strengthening women’s roles in renewable energy is key to achieving multiple SDGs.

### 5.1.3 Water

Similar to energy, the information on women in the water sector in the region is lacking. However, there has been some regional movement on gender in water. In June 2018, the Women Water Forum was held in Dushanbe, as part of the “Water for Sustainable Development” Conference. The Forum brought together regional governments, donors including USAID and UN agencies, as well as international, regional, and national NGOs and water experts to discuss the importance of women’s participation in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water and their inclusion in water governance at all levels. There are significant gender disparities in the water sector. Women are important actors in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and water usage, yet their voices are often ignored.

As a result of the Women Water Forum, each of the four countries developed Gender Roadmaps for the water sector, which are applied for water sector reforms at the national, regional, and global levels. Investments in the water sector from a gender perspective include promoting women’s participation and leadership in the development of water sector policies and programs; supporting girls to study STEM, and developing partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), local and national governments, and the private sector, especially when it comes to financing for SDG 6: *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*.

## 5.2 DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

### 5.2.1 Civil Society

The Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World 2018* report rates Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan one out of four on the question of freedom for NGOs, especially those engaged in human rights and governance-related work; Turkmenistan is rated zero out of four.<sup>46</sup> According to respondents, common barriers to CSOs include issues with registration and similar administrative problems. While the three countries are all given the same rating, it is the observation of the GSIA team that the environment for LGBTI organizations seems to be more advanced in Kazakhstan than in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan’s zero rating is undoubtedly based on the fact that there is no civil society there to speak of, since it is comprised of government NGOs (GONGOs). USAID/CA has been utilizing a regional approach to civil society strengthening, primarily through the Civil Society Development Organization (ARGO), an umbrella organization headquartered in Kazakhstan but with regional influence through its numerous member organizations across Central Asia. ARGO provides capacity-building to its members,

---

<sup>42</sup> Interview with FtF, July 2, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Central Asia Region Energy Links Project: Gender Assessment, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> ADB (2018) p. XVI.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective>, last visited August 10, 2019.

<sup>46</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018>, last accessed August 11, 2019.



administers small grants, dialogues with government (consultative body with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on human dimensions issues), and supports in-country and regional networks.<sup>47</sup>

Besides restrictions imposed by the government in all four countries, civil society in the region is aging. Concerns were raised about the need to bring in more young people, who do not seem to be interested in the sector due to low salaries. Strengthening CSOs capacity in social media could be one way to make the sector more approachable to the younger generation. In addition, CSOs can play an important role in delivering and promoting messages of gender equality, human rights, and social inclusion.

### **5.2.2 Media**

In all four countries, there are restrictions to media freedom. However, it has been identified by many respondents in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as an important tool for tackling gender and other stereotypes, as well as for being a voice in countering violence extremism. Even in Turkmenistan, where there is no freedom of media to speak of, working with the Government to promote messages of gender equality and social inclusion is a viable option, especially since the country is keen to meet its SDG goals. Investing in progressive young bloggers, YouTubers, Instagrammers, and other influencers who can spread positive messages in Russian and local languages can help with developing an inclusive environment. This support can include grants, capacity-building opportunities and investment in local and regional networks. Local media platforms such as NeMolchi and Tajik Mama not only empower women by providing a space for them to voice their opinions, but they also demonstrate the power of grass-roots movements.

### **5.2.3 Justice and Governance**

In all four countries, access to justice is limited for women, people with disabilities, and LGBTI individuals, as well as poor and rural people. Research in Kazakhstan found that social norms (especially in GBV situations), lack of women's resources and legal literacy, and low capacity and knowledge of the justice system employees are key obstacles to women's access to justice.<sup>48</sup>

An example of improved access to justice can be found in Uzbekistan's e-governance and e-court systems, which create new opportunities for dialogue between the Government and the population. These systems are especially important for women who have less mobility due to time consumed by family obligations and stricter control of their movement. In addition, e-governance provides anonymity, which is an important fact for women who may, due to social pressure, be discouraged or embarrassed from going to court, especially when a case of domestic violence is in question. In fact, the number of cases filed by women has increased as a result of e-governance.<sup>49</sup> Another way of increasing justice to vulnerable groups is through provision of free legal aid. USAID has been supporting these options across the region, for example, through the Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan Program (JRUP) and the Land Market Development Activity in Tajikistan.

In governance, women's participation is low, ranging from a high of approximately 27 percent of women in Parliament in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, to a low of 16 percent in Uzbekistan. Absence of female decision-makers at the policy level means that women's perspectives and unique needs are not taken into account, which is a problem considering that women make up approximately 50 percent of the population.

### **5.2.4 CVE**

Prevention of violent extremism (PVE)/countering violent extremism (CVE) is a serious concern of the Central Asian governments who have, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), created the PVE Network for Central Asia. This network links government representatives, civil society groups, academia, international experts, and the UNODC to build the region's resilience and cooperation. The involved parties share research, evidence, and data to assess and respond to drivers of radicalization, and understand approaches and good practices for countering violent extremism.<sup>50</sup> Key drivers of radicalization in Central Asia and worldwide include:<sup>51</sup> 1) social exclusion—

<sup>47</sup> Interview with ARGO, July 5, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> ICJ, Women's Access to Justice in Kazakhstan: Identifying the Obstacles & Need for Change, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> FGD, July 8, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> <https://capve.org/en/>, last visited August 11, 2019.

<sup>51</sup> UNDP, Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia, Regional Brief 2018.

vulnerable populations that feel isolated in a new environment, such as migrant workers and prison population, are at high risk for recruitment; 2) social injustice—radical movements may be especially attracted to youth who had no access to alternative justice, such as mediation, and ended up in prison for a minor infraction; 3) endemic economic exclusion—inequalities, economic disparities, and exploitation of workers are often used as reference points for radical propaganda; 4) poor government service provision and lack of institutional trust—unemployment, informal employment, corruption, and nepotism; 5) religious education—exposure to inadequately educated or radically indoctrinated religious scholars in schools, prisons, labor camps, and informal migrant communities; and 6) protracted conflict—unresolved collective grievances of certain groups, unaddressed war crimes, persistent injustice, and discrimination—all entrench alienation.

Not until recently has research started looking into women’s roles in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization. In fact, women are still often thought of only as victims, and can be difficult to imagine them as active recruiters and supporters of radical extremism. For example, women who have returned from Syria and Iraq and are being repatriated back to Kazakhstan, are provided support services, while their husbands are jailed.

USAID/CA’s regional Dignity and Rights (DAR) project, which works on issues of migrants and Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP), has a CVE component that addressed the vulnerabilities of migrants to extremist messaging and recruitment. The project plans to undertake research on multiple aspects of CVE, including identifying hotspots for recruitment, reasons for joining, women’s involvement, and historical nature of information. UNDP Kazakhstan is implementing a multi-country CVE intervention in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, which provides access to work/entrepreneurship support, on-demand skills development activities, and informal social support platforms, networks and counseling services, with the aim of equipping youth networks and individuals to withstand the pull factors of extremism and develop and spread “positive” narratives, via modern communication technologies and face-to-face engagements.<sup>52</sup>

### **5.2.5 CTIP**

Worldwide, children, women, and families are making up an increasing share of migrants, with the male share at 52 percent, and female at 48 percent.<sup>53</sup> Due to restrictions on women’s mobility in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, migration from these two countries is mostly male, with less than a fifth of women in migration flows.<sup>54</sup>

Both male and female migrants from Central Asia are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, whether they migrate across borders or domestically. However, due to gender-based discrimination in migration policies, which view migrant women primarily through a lens of helpless victims, rather than economically empowered individuals, female migrants often end up in informal employment, especially in care and domestic work, which perpetuate gender stereotypes about “women’s work” and offer minimal, if any, labor protection. This, along with being in irregular migratory channels, increases women’s exposure to human rights violations, GBV, early marriage, and trafficking.<sup>55</sup> Men are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in the construction sector.

Migration is a difficult process to begin with, but so is the reintegration of trafficking victims. It requires multiple elements, including access to trafficking shelters, psychological services, health care services (especially for treatment of TB and STIs), education on their rights as labor migrants, income generating opportunities, and outreach and opportunities for their families who are left behind. These activities are mainly supported and implemented by NGOs and international donors, including USAID/CA’s DAR activity, and less so by the Governments, although there have been recent advances to streamline and address migration issues jointly at the national and regional level.

---

<sup>52</sup> UNDP, Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia, Regional Brief 2018.

<sup>53</sup> <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/04/news-calls-for-coordinated-gender-sensitive-strategy-for-migrants-in-tajikistan>, last accessed August 11, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> ESCAP. Examining Women’s Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries. 2018

<sup>55</sup> <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/12/statement-joint-international-migrants-day> last accessed August 12, 2019.

## **5.3 SOCIAL SECTOR IMPROVEMENTS (HEALTH AND EDUCATION)**

### **5.3.1 Basic Education**

Currently, USAID/CA's basic education programming is active only in Tajikistan, although there are plans to expand to Uzbekistan. Therefore, the GSIA team did not spend a lot of resources on researching basic education regionally. However, across all four countries, basic education is free and generally accessible to all, with the exception of children with disabilities who must attend separate schools of lower quality or have home visits by tutors. The main issue in higher education for all four countries is gender segregation, where women are concentrated in certain areas of study, which generally lead to lower paid jobs, and men can be found in the fields of study with projected higher earnings. In Tajikistan, for example, although enrollment rates are higher for young women (53.9 percent) than for men (46.1 percent), women are over-represented in Education (72.3 percent); Humanities (70 percent); Social Sciences, Economics and Business, and Natural Sciences (64 percent each); and Health and Social Welfare (Medicine) (80 percent). Men are in Technical Science and Technology (69 percent), Law (65.5 percent), and Military Training and Security (90.1 percent).<sup>56</sup>

### **5.3.2 TB**

The 2018 Global Tuberculosis Report of the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the TB burden at an incidence rate of 66 per 100,000 for Kazakhstan, 85 for Tajikistan, and 73 for Uzbekistan.<sup>57</sup> TB rates are declining in the region; the highest annual rates of decline between 2007 and 2017 were in Kazakhstan (-9.4 percent) and Tajikistan (-7.4 percent).<sup>58</sup> At the same time, declining TB rates mean poor TB surveillance and discovery of new cases.

Key populations at risk for contracting TB are migrants and prison populations. Stigma and many stereotypes surround tuberculosis in the region, partially due to historical isolation of TB patients in special hospitals and lack of public information about its causes and treatments. Long-term treatment regimens and isolation of TB patients into hospitals create further obstacles for women who are not able to leave their family duties in accessing TB treatment. Women with TB experience high levels of stigma and their families are more likely to hide this diagnosis and treatment from extended family and the neighborhood worrying about potential social consequences for the woman herself and her family. Girls who have TB are less likely to get married. Migrants with TB will frequently stop their treatments, without being cured, feeling the pressure to return to earning money to support their families. Across all four countries, the Governments have not put enough effort to raise awareness on TB, how it is contracted, what the treatment entails, and what the consequences are of stopping it.

### **5.3.3 HIV**

In 2018, the estimated HIV prevalence for individuals aged 15-49 was 0.2 percent for Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the estimated number of people of all ages living with HIV was 26,000 for Kazakhstan, 13,000 for Tajikistan, and 52,000 for Uzbekistan.<sup>59</sup> No similar data for Turkmenistan are available.

The key at risk populations for HIV infections in the region are people who inject drugs (PWID), sex workers, MSM, people in prison, young people, and women. A regional study found that male PWID are more likely to have women who do not inject drugs as their primary sexual partners; coupled with the fact that male-to-female sexual transmission of HIV is more efficient than female-to-male transmission, women are more likely to be affected than men.<sup>60</sup>

People living with HIV often experience stigma and discrimination, and therefore frequently hide their positive status from their communities. In Kazakhstan, for example, legal discrimination against HIV positive people entails not allowing them to adopt a child, serve in the military, and obtain Kazakh citizenship or a residence permit. In addition, HIV positive people with disabilities are not entitled to have

---

<sup>56</sup> VNR.

<sup>57</sup> WHO. Global Tuberculosis Report 2018.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>, last visited July 27, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> UNAIDS Data 2019.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>, last visited July 27, 2019.



an individual assistant, an allowance provided by the state for people with disabilities. Eighteen (18) percent of people living with HIV in Kazakhstan report being denied health services.<sup>61</sup> Nearly 10 percent of pregnant Kazakh women with HIV who seek medical treatment are strongly encouraged by the health professionals to have an abortion.<sup>62</sup> In Tajikistan, HIV positive individuals are legally prohibited from pursuing a medical degree, adopting a child, or being a legal guardian. Women with HIV engaged in prostitution face discrimination and violence and are denied access to HIV prevention services.

## 6.0 GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AT USAID/CENTRAL ASIA

Besides analyzing how gender and social inclusion can be best integrated into future USAID/CA programming, the GSIA team discussed with USAID staff in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan the enabling environment at the Mission. In addition, the survey touched upon this area of discussion as well.

Generally, the staff reported a willingness to integrate gender and social inclusion into programming but also a need for further training and support. The Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan offices seem to be most in need of opportunities to engage on gender and social inclusion internally within their own offices. This is partially reflected in the fact that neither of those two offices has a dedicated Gender Adviser, as Tajikistan and Kazakhstan do. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan only have gender points of contact (PoCs) who do not have any gender-related duties written into their job descriptions. Perhaps due to the lack of capacity at these two country offices, neither has an internal or cross-agency gender working group, although the gender PoCs are the members of the Inclusive Development Working Group, which includes members from all four country offices. In Tajikistan, USAID is a member of the U.S. Embassy's Inter-Agency Gender Working Group, whose other members include the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), and the Public Affairs and PoliCon sections of the U.S. Embassy. Challenges with this particular group include the fact that its effectiveness often depends on leadership, and with frequent changes of the group's Chair (American staff) over the past couple years, the group has been trying to find its footing and purpose. There is a lot of desire by the local group members to elevate the reach of this group, so empowering them would be an excellent approach.

While the team certainly noted the staff's desire to improve their capacity on these topics, there were also examples of how gender and social inclusion were deeply rooted in cultural perceptions and often perceived as status quo in all four country offices. Both local and American staff described cultural gender norms as difficult to challenge. In addition, for areas which are perceived as very technical (for example, energy and water) the staff find it difficult to identify specific gender barriers in their programs. This can be addressed through providing tailored training about the impact of local gender stereotypes on economy and access to resources for women and men. In addition, for each area of USAID focus, tailored training can be provided on how women and girls, men and girls, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, ethnic minorities, and youth are impacted differently by programming and what measures can be taken to address these differences.

It is not always the case in a USAID Mission that staff are interested in gender and social inclusion. Sometimes, these concepts will only be viewed as additional work, without fully understanding how they contribute to better programming outcomes. At USAID/CA that does not appear to be the case, and the staff genuinely appear to be interested in promoting these values and learning how to be better at them. Therefore, it would behoove the Mission leadership to fully take advantage of this enabling environment, and to prioritize investing in its staff and IPs' skills and knowledge. It goes without saying that leaving this legacy is an important part of each country's J2SR.

---

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>, last visited July 27, 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Central Asian Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS, July 3, 2019.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

USAID/CA, as an important donor in the region, has a significant amount of leeway in promotion of gender equality and social inclusion, not only as USG values, but also in line with regional Governments' national and international obligations. The 2020-2025 RDCS should therefore not shy away from fully embracing inclusive development approaches based on research, analysis, and recommendations presented in this report. Two key takeaways from this GSIA are:

- The capacity of USAID/CA staff must be strengthened so they can be in the best position to implement strategic and sectoral recommendations outlined below.
- Gender and social inclusion as concepts are very much country specific. Understanding the nuances of local context is crucial for successful approach and delivery of USAID/CA programs.

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented here are for USAID/Central Asia. They are divided into three types of recommendations:

- **Strategic:** These recommendations represent a general gender and social inclusion approach which is not specific to certain activities. In other words, these are the recommendations that answer the question: **How** does USAID/CA look at gender and social inclusion strategically?
- **Sector specific:**<sup>63</sup> These are more specific (not necessarily at the activity level, at a project level) recommendations. When USAID/CA is planning and designing new programming, these are the types of activities that should find their way into solicitations. Furthermore, these are the types of activities that should be expected of IPs to develop further when implementing their activities. These recommendations answer the question: **What** does USAID/CA do to specifically address gender and social inclusion imbalances, gaps, and barriers in activity sectors?
- **Mission Operational:** The recommendations presented here are meant to improve the enabling environment for gender and social inclusion at the Mission level. The implementation of this set of recommendations will make the implementation of the other two categories easier.

Recommendations for disability, youth, LGBTI, and GBV are all folded into the categories above as appropriate.

### 8.1 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Whenever possible, collaborate with organizations and networks working on women's empowerment and gender equality; support events that promote female participation and decision-making across sectors.
- Ensure that each activity's gender components are in line with USAID gender equality framework, as well as with the national priorities and government policies for gender equality and women's empowerment in each of the countries, and their SDG goals and targets.
- Continuously showcase and promote gender and social inclusion best practices and lessons learned among the IPs, activity stakeholders, and other relevant audiences.
- Include evidence-based interventions aimed at addressing gender stereotypes in all USAID/CA programming.
- Recognize that women are not a monolithic group, but rather represent a plethora of differences and are often a subject of intersectional discrimination. In addition to discrimination based on sex, they experience discrimination on disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, social and economic status, marital status, health status, etc.

---

<sup>63</sup> Sector-specific recommendations state which of the three GEFE outcomes they support: Reductions in gaps between males and females in access to/control over economic, political, and social resources (Outcome 1); Reductions in the prevalence of GBV (Outcome 2); and Reductions in constraints that prevent women and girls from leading, participating fully in, and influencing decisions in their societies (Outcome 3).

- Strengthen programming and coordinate advocacy efforts on GBV across sectors with other donors.
- Include target beneficiary groups—especially disadvantaged groups, such as youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTI people in meaningful engagement in decision-making and program design. Be responsive in listening and responding to their needs, rather than trying to fit them within an already envisioned and inflexible program.
- For all programming that is aimed at empowering young women, ensure that onsite childcare is provided so that women are able to fully participate in program activities without having to take care of their children at the same time.
- Include communications components in all USAID/CA programs, so that they are well equipped to expertly explain to the external stakeholders how each program is addressing gender gaps and challenging gender stereotypes in a sustained way that is beneficial to the host country. These components can include strengthening social media engagement, creating relevant and engaging content focusing on existing gender stereotypes and their social impact, and supporting relevant influencers.
- Always promote gender and social inclusion elements in events, conferences, meetings with government officials, and USAID/CA senior staff speeches, regardless of the topic. This should be done by 1) providing U.S. and international, regional, and national examples of how women contribute to society in a relevant sector, and 2) emphasizing that gender equality and social inclusion are guiding values for the USG and USAID in engagement with host country governments.
- For all programming involving people with disabilities, include transportation costs and ensure that program materials and venues are accessible for people with different types of disabilities.
- Support awareness-raising campaigns about GBV, sexual harassment, disability, HIV, TB, etc., continuously throughout the year for them to be more effective, rather than only in conjunction with events/dates such as International Women’s Day, 16 days of activism against GBV, or International Day of Persons with Disabilities, when they are competing for attention with similar campaigns, supported by other donors, NGOs, and the Government.
- Cultivate and build on gender and social inclusion connections and linkages between USAID/CA activities in different sectors, in order to enable cross-activity and cross-sectoral collaboration and lead to a more holistic approach.
- Support collection of sex disaggregated data as a basis for more evidence-based decision-making by investing in capacity-building of National Statistical Offices, where possible, in collaboration with other donors.
- Always participate in any gender and social inclusion working groups across sectors that involve other donors, CSOs, and governments to learn about what others are doing on this front, to find partners for future activities, and to stay a relevant player in this space.

## **8.2            SECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.2.1         Economic Growth**

#### *Investment in Trade and Markets*

- Explore ways to support remote (home-based) job opportunities for young people, young home-based mothers and people with disabilities. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Support country governments to improve the existing environment for women in the formal work force, including parental leave, flexible work hours, equal wages, sexual harassment, childcare support, and equal opportunities for professional advancement. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Employ a holistic approach to supporting female entrepreneurs, inclusive of a whole range of services, such as self-esteem courses, provision of aid with taxes, marketing, networking, working with husbands and in-laws to secure their support, etc. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Support women in non-traditional and marketable fields to challenge the status quo of gender occupational segregation, targeting rural women, victims of DV and trafficking, and women with

disabilities. At the basic activity level, this means providing options to women that go beyond canning, jam making, baking, and sewing. (Outcomes 1 and 3)

- Support studies on women's economic empowerment in CA region. Women's economic empowerment entails not only access to economic opportunities, but also control over the earnings. While access is frequently addressed in research and studies, the control is not. (Outcome 1)

#### *Energy*

- Support studies on women's participation in the renewable and conventional energy sectors in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan that propose solutions for challenging gender stereotypes in the sector. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at energy sector organizations regionally. An example of a very successful USG program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities (<https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>). (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Support regional events and networks of women in energy. (Outcome 1)

#### *Water*

- Promote women's leadership and participation in IWRM. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Support regional events and networks of women in IWRM. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Provide scholarships for women to study IWRM abroad. (Outcomes 1 and 3)

### **8.2.2 Democracy and Governance**

#### *Civil Society*

- Use local and Central Asia trainers to build capacity of civil society groups, ensuring that they represent diverse backgrounds, where possible and appropriate (for example, people with disabilities).
- Provide tailored and accessible capacity-building support to disability and LGBTI NGOs.
- Work with LGBTI groups from the human rights and civil society angle, rather than the health angle, where possible (currently Kazakhstan); invest in capacity-building of LGBTI organizations elsewhere so they are ready to engage at the civil society level.
- Develop relationships with LGBTI groups that are willing to engage (Kazakhstan and Tajikistan), taking into account existing stigma and lack of sensitivity that may exist in USAID staff members.
- Explore ways of funding LGBTI groups without registration and support the efforts of those who choose to be registered.
- Support the network of CA CSOs to share regional experiences and build regional knowledge on addressing gender stereotypes and obstacles to gender equality. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Develop strategies with influential CSOs such as ARGO to attract and recruit more young people into the civil society sector.

#### *Media*

- Invest in capacity-building of progressive female journalists in the region; due to governmental restrictions on free media, there is a "brain drain" problem, where many male journalists are going abroad. Due to culturally sanctioned women's more restricted mobility, they are more likely to stay in the country. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Provide support to regional online platforms that promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and human rights, such as NeMolchi. (Outcomes 1 and 3)
- Engage with and support existing online youth communities to raise awareness and educate on gender stereotypes, social stigma, risks associated with migration, CVE, TB/HIV/STIs, etc.

#### *Justice and Governance*

- Invest efforts in implementation of CRPD in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and ratification in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- Support changing governments' approaches to disability from "medical" to "social empowerment."
- Support strengthening of processes for reporting GBV cases by capacity-building of intake law enforcement and health care professionals. (Outcomes 1 and 2)

#### *CVE*

- Include CVE component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking. Migrants are one of the most susceptible groups to CVE. Any service provision activity aimed at this group, and their families, should also discuss the dangers of CVE, ways to identify if they are being recruited, and tips for how to protect themselves.
- Support regional CVE-related events that promote women and youth as active change agents. (Outcome 3)

#### *C-TIP*

- Continue to support provision of information services for labor migrants and their families based on their needs.
- Support regional governmental initiatives on migration.

### **8.2.3 Social Sector Improvements (Education and Health)**

#### *Health*

- Continue supporting awareness raising and education on preventing stigmatization of people with HIV and TB targeting the general public.
- Use existing program opportunities to address stigma and gender barriers associated with TB and HIV among medical professionals. For TB, this can be accomplished via information campaigns that dispel myths about TB that negatively affect women and provide further insights into economic and social benefits of completing TB treatment.
- Support the education of health care professionals in interacting with HIV+ vulnerable populations. Health care professionals lack skills on how to properly service vulnerable populations such as MSM, transgender women, PWID, and pregnant women who are HIV positive.

#### *Basic Education*

- Support programs in primary schools that challenge gender stereotypes, and that include students, teachers, parents, and communities. (Outcomes 1, 2, and 3)
- Support inclusive education in primary schools.
- Collaborate with NGOs and high-tech companies who produce/distribute special equipment/devices to help visually and hearing-impaired children.
- Work with the Ministry of Education and its departments to develop and include a module on inclusive education into pedagogical colleges and universities curricula for pre-service students.

### **8.3 MISSION OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Support training of Agreement Officer Representatives (AORs)/ Contract Officer Representatives (CORs) on gender and social inclusion in their respective sectors. If staff receive scholarships from USAID/Washington to attend training out of the country, allow them to go, even if they have already fulfilled their annual training quota. Gender capacity-building of USAID staff should be viewed as a necessity and a long-term investment.
- Engage with the IPs regularly to share with them the latest updates on gender and social inclusion at USAID, and to invite them to relevant capacity-building events.
- Ensure that AORs/CORs are aware of their responsibilities in regard to gender integration as outlined in Automated Directives System (ADS) 205.
- Provide relevant gender and social inclusion training for gender PoCs in their sectors.
- Ensure that every cooperative agreement and contract has a requirement for a gender analysis to be conducted in the first three months following project start-up.

- Invite USAID gender and social inclusion experts to conduct a two-day inclusive development training for all staff and IPs.
- Build the capacity of the Mission's LGBTI Coordinator. LGBTI issues are sensitive, and knowledge building regarding safety, security, and confidentiality when in contact with LGBTI groups, as well as being aware of regional trends, issues, and usage of appropriate language are all required.
- Ensure that all projects and activities include USAID gender goals and customized gender-sensitive indicators in their Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plans to support their capacity to measure progress on addressing gender gaps.
- For gender PoCs, at least 10 to 15 percent of their position descriptions should be related to their gender inclusion work. (Efforts are underway to achieve this goal.)

# ANNEXES

## **ANNEX I: GSIA STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **SECTION C – DESCRIPTION/SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK**

#### **I. TITLE OF ACTIVITY**

The title of the Activity is the USAID/Central Asia Gender and Inclusive Development Analysis.

#### **II. OBJECTIVE**

The journey to self-reliance intends to strengthen the capacity and commitment of institutions and governments, as well as priority populations and individuals, as they transition to locally led and sustained development. Understanding gender norms, demographic transitions, and communities of marginalized or underrepresented groups is key to building effective self-reliance in USAID investments and policies that protect, support, engage, and empower citizens, institutions, and emerging leaders in their ability to contribute to and advance their health, education, employment, and civic life, as well as that of their nation. Thus, a vital opportunity to incentivize increased capacity and commitment of a society can be gained from knowing how USAID, governments, and the private sector can tangibly support the peoples of Central Asia to advance development outcomes in a way that is both more cost-effective and sustainable.

This gender and social inclusion analysis (GSIA) will inform the mission's new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS), Development Objectives (DOs), and Intermediate Results (IRs) including disaggregated reporting for Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The analysis will help the USAID Central Asia Mission understand and explain macro-level challenges between males and females that exist within and between countries. It will also identify how gender norms and power relations may influence achievement of the mission's specific objectives in each context (e.g., country, geographic, cultural, institutional, economic, etc.). Closely associated with gender, this analysis will explore issues related to youth; people with disabilities; ethnic and religious minorities, and, where permissible, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) persons.<sup>64</sup>

#### **III. BACKGROUND**

The USAID Central Asia Mission is one mission with headquarters based in Almaty and offices in Astana, Ashgabat, Tashkent, and Dushanbe to provide development assistance to—Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The mission portfolio principally includes work in the following sectors: investment in trade and markets, agriculture, energy and water, democratic institutions building, civil society, and social sector improvements (health and education).

Much has changed in Central Asia since the last gender analysis was conducted in 2009, and subsequent gender mapping in 2012. To address the changing dynamics and enhance mission policies, operations, and investments, on November 9, 2018, the USAID Central Asia Mission released a Mission Order on Gender and Inclusive Development, in which it established roles and responsibilities for staff and established mission gender, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI coordinator functions. This policy aims to better integrate inclusive development throughout the mission portfolio and advance gender and social inclusion in all relevant mission strategies, projects, and activities. A particular focus is given to the journey to self-reliance<sup>65</sup> and supporting locally led and sustained development.

With combined population of 62.8 million, of which approximately 43 percent are below 24 years old (approximately 1:1 women to men ratio),<sup>66</sup> the four countries of the Central Asia Mission offer diverse development opportunities, challenges, and trajectories. The information below is an illustration of the gender, youth, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI situation in Central Asia, and is in no way exhaustive.

---

<sup>64</sup> <https://pages.usaid.gov/E3/GENDEV/inclusive-approaches>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>

<sup>66</sup> CIA Factbook, July 2018



## **Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan, which has experienced significant economic growth in recent years, has taken a leading role in promoting regional stability and cooperation in Central Asia. However, the country's progress toward gender equality has not kept in pace with its other accomplishments—the country scores consistently high in terms of equal access to education for women and men, but men's life expectancy is significantly lower than women's. There has been limited progress in women's political empowerment and improving women's access to economic opportunities and labor. There is significant underemployment and unemployment among women in Kazakhstan. It is estimated that there are two million women categorized as “employed” in the informal sector who are denied or lack social guarantees, such as maternity benefits and pensions.

At present, the Kazakh population has approximately 4 million youth aged 14 to 29—2.3 million in cities and 1.7 million in rural areas. The Government of Kazakhstan (GoK) Youth Policy (February 9, 2015) is reportedly a government priority. The policy is designed to create conditions for the younger generation's comprehensive development, participation in the decision-making process, and socialization. Its priorities include addressing the 3.9 percent current youth unemployment rate. Additional issues include suicide rates and early motherhood. More than 5,000 girls aged 15-18 become pregnant each year, with every fourth opting for an abortion, according to Ministry of Social Development statistics.

LGBTI people in Kazakhstan report discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity during the course of their everyday lives within their families and the wider society. Negative attitudes toward LGBTI people, such as social exclusion, taunting, and violence, often cause the victims physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Further, LGBTI issues are openly condemned by politicians; conservative lawmakers in Kazakhstan's parliament have indicated they may try to pass another version of the anti-gay propaganda law in the future. Thus, many LGBTI persons report being compelled to keep their sexual orientation or gender identity a secret from almost all people in their lives.

Kazakhstan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015 and adopted the law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts on protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.” At present, of the 674,000 reported cases of persons with disabilities, 61.9 percent are able-bodied, 25.4 percent are retired, and 12.7 percent are children under 18 years old, and this number is growing.<sup>67</sup> A UN report stated more than 70 percent of the public infrastructure in the country is inaccessible to those with physical disabilities, including transport infrastructure and cultural and sporting facilities.<sup>68</sup> Males and females with disabilities face significantly more difficulties in both public and private spheres in attaining access to housing, health, education, and employment.

## **Tajikistan**

Tajikistan is the poorest of the Central Asian countries where 32 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line of \$1.90 a day. Seventy-three percent of Tajikistan's population lives in rural areas with agriculture accounting for 53 percent of employment and 23 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). With few options at home, an estimated one million Tajik citizens, 12-15 percent of whom are women, migrate abroad to work, which contributes to a high proportion of female-headed households, especially in rural areas.

Women and girls face limited access to education and employment opportunities and growing religious conservatism which is reinforcing traditional gender roles. These inequalities lead to material resource deprivation, curtail economic autonomy, and weaken women's bargaining position within the family.

Gender-based violence is a pervasive problem throughout the country across every socioeconomic category, affecting women, children, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI people. The Tajikistan 2017 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) reported a seven percent increase in spousal abuse over the last five years. Up to 30 percent of women say that they are afraid of their husband most of the time, and 52 percent some of the time. Violence against women is deeply ingrained in the culture and social norms of Tajikistan where communities consider wife-beating as a personal/familial matter. Up to 97 percent of men

---

<sup>67</sup> <https://astanatimes.com/2018/10/kazakhstan-develops-new-national-plan-for-people-with-disabilities/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.edgekz.com/kazakhstan-making-strides-in-disability-access-acceptance/>

and 60 percent of women between 15-49 believe a husband is justified to beat his wife for reasons such as arguing or leaving the home without permission. Help is not always available as officials often neglect survivors' needs for protection, services, and justice, exacerbating the situation.

Yet there are some signs of progress. According to service providers and civil society activists, the adoption of the Family Violence Law in 2013 has increased public awareness on gender-based violence. The government, with support from donors and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), established Gender-Sensitive Police Units in police stations and Victim Support Rooms in hospitals, designed to make these institutions more accessible to and supportive of victims of family violence. However, government efforts to prevent and respond to domestic violence remain inadequate and fail to ensure critical protection and support for survivors.

According to official statistics, in 2015 young people between 15 and 29 years old constituted 51 percent of the total population.<sup>69</sup> Today, young people below 30 years comprise 70 percent of the population. At the same time, young people constitute the major part of the unemployed citizens in Tajikistan. The country's NEET (No Education, Employment, or Training) rate is reportedly one of the highest among post-Soviet countries. In 2016, 29.3 percent of youth aged 15-24 had no job, were not studying towards degree, and were not in professional training. Female NEET rate was nine times higher than the male rate.<sup>70</sup>

Since the beginning of labor migration in 1992 (following the collapse of the USSR), Tajik youth constituted the majority of migrants from Tajikistan.<sup>71</sup> Today, the proportion of youth among Tajik migrants is larger than ever before—70 percent of Tajik migrants in Russia (which employs the majority of Tajik labor migrants) belong to the younger generation.

The law on social protection of persons with disabilities in Tajikistan applies to individuals having physical or mental disabilities, including sensory and developmental disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and provision of other state services, but public and private institutions generally do not commit resources to implement the law. The law requires government buildings, schools, hospitals, and transportation, including air travel, to be accessible to persons with disabilities; however, these provisions are not enforced.

Many children with disabilities are not able to attend schools because doctors do not deem them “medically fit.” Those who are considered medically unfit are allowed to attend special state-run schools established specifically for persons with physical and mental disabilities. The government charges the Tajik Commission on Fulfillment of International Human Rights, the Society of Invalids, and local and regional governmental structures with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Although the government maintains groups living and medical facilities with disabilities, funding is limited, and facilities are in poor condition.

Throughout the country there are reports that LGBTI individuals face regular physical and psychological abuse, harassment, extortion, and exploitation for revealing their LGBTI status to their families. LGBTI persons are victims of police harassment and faced threats of public beatings by community members. Hate crimes against members of the LGBTI community reportedly go unaddressed. LGBTI representatives claim health-care providers discriminate against and harass LGBTI persons. LGBTI advocacy and health groups report harassment from government officials and clergy, to include violent threats, as well as obstruction of their activities by the Ministry of Health. In 2017, different international media outlets reported that the Interior Ministry General Prosecutor's Office had created a registry of hundreds of communities.<sup>72</sup> That same year, the USAID Tajikistan Country Office was told by the government Ombudsmen that same sex relationships were going to be re-criminalized (they were decriminalized by law in 1998). To date, nothing official (legislative, normative documentation) has been released. However,

<sup>69</sup> State Employment Program of the RT, adopted by the Tajik Government on 25.11.2015, N 709.

<sup>70</sup> Mapping the vulnerable and excluded groups of adolescents and youth in Tajikistan, Desk Study Report, UNICEF, UNDP Tajikistan, Dushanbe 2017.

<sup>71</sup> “Molodezh sostavlyayet 70 percent tajikskikh ofitsialnikh migrantov v Rossii” (The youth constitutes 70 percent of official Tajik migrants in Russia), 15.04.2006, Asia-plus, <http://www.news.tj/ru/news/molodezh-sostavlyayet-70-tadzhikskikh-ofitsialnykh-migrantov-v-rossii>.

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/17/tajikistan-gay-lesbian-register-medical-checks>

there are signs the country is increasing its discrimination of LGBTI persons: the National HIV Response Program 2017-2020 signed by the President in 2017 does not include men having sex with men as a target treatment group; LGBTI organizations do not exist (they are sometimes labeled as HIV service organizations); “promotion of same-sex relations” remains criminalized (not by law, but the person(s) may be called by and/or interrogated/harassed by the national security service); and several LGBTI NGOs have been shut down.

## **Turkmenistan**

As Turkmenistan has pursued an official foreign policy based upon permanent neutrality since 1995, its relationships with international organizations are very limited. As such, according to UN report efforts to promote gender equality are not implemented even though it is recognized under the country’s law. The 2015-2020 National Action Plan on Gender Equality was a step forward to eliminate gender inequalities and domestic violence in Turkmenistan. Women hold 25.4 percent of positions in executive bodies and 26.4 percent of seats in the parliament. Women make up 42.3 percent of private sector employees and fill the majority of education and health care positions.

While U.S Government assistance programs in Turkmenistan attempt to reduce economic and social inequalities between men and women, such efforts face challenges similar to those related to the promotion of economic growth and broader civic participation.

The Government of Turkmenistan developed and approved the Youth Policy Law that was drafted by parliamentary working group on youth, in September 7, 2013. The law interprets youth as category of population aged 14-30. The Policy speaks about rights and responsibilities of youth and includes such important rights as: active participation in social, political life, and economy; social support to young families; education; guarantees in the sphere of labor and employment.

Nevertheless, not every item of policy is implemented adequately in the country and, per USAID analysis, each year about 40,000 of youth leave the country to study abroad, and few of them return. There is just one highly politicized youth organization, the Government Organized Non-Governmental Organization, the Youth Union of Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan has demonstrated a strong commitment to socially oriented policies and opportunities to create employment for people with disabilities, since 2008. Measures undertaken by the government within the decade have been in line with Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Turkmenistan joined in 2008. In 2018, Turkmenistan developed and approved a new disability law. Only few NGOs in Turkmenistan are working with people with disabilities supporting them and protecting their rights. One of the NGOs is “Yengme” that protects rights of disabled children, and the “Association of Invalids” works mostly with adults and employment opportunities. “Yengme” is a member of a Central Asia network of women with disabilities aimed at improving leadership potential and enhancing rights of women with disabilities and other national working groups’ member. It enjoys influence among other NGOs and relevant government organization, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan works with disabled people ensuring for them some social protection.

LGBTI persons are a hidden group in Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan criminal law has an article that includes punishment for LGBTI persons, which is strictly enforced by police. Some international donors such as UNFPA and UNAIDS have tried to work with LGBTI persons on HIV prevention through anonymous meetings, but fear of arrest restricted participation.

## **Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan recently began democratic and rule of law reforms, which on the surface seem to be going in a forward direction. Its gender profile, however, is influenced by many factors including the legacy of Soviet gender equality policies, social and economic difficulties from the Soviet transition period, and traditional Uzbek values and culture. Women are largely limited to unpaid work or lower-paying jobs because of household tasks and childcare. The Government of Uzbekistan, through the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, is developing projects to increase women’s empowerment. The issue of violence against women and girls, and of domestic violence in particular, has been for many years a very low priority in

Uzbekistan, still often considered as a “personal affair” and not as a “crime.” Due to a rebound of traditional patriarchal values since independence in 1991, families are increasingly imposing restrictions on women’s activities outside of home and promoting early marriage. Rural girls and women are particularly at risk of gender-based violence due to their “disadvantaged status.” In this context, although there is no official sex-disaggregated statistics on gender-based violence, incidences of violence against women within families are reported to be on the rise.

In 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed an Order “On measures to further improve the system of state support for the disabled people.” The document aims to improve the system of state support and medical and social assistance, and to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities providing them with comprehensive assistance in obtaining education and employment.

Currently there are 10,400,000 boys and girls under 18 or approximately 40 percent of population. Over 17 million people, 64 percent of population, are under 30.<sup>73</sup> The State Youth Policy of Uzbekistan adopted in 2016 makes a clear commitment to provide youth with quality education, health services, and employment, and to guarantee their rights, freedoms, and interests so that they effectively participate in the implementation of the state youth policy, in shaping their own future. Enhancement of the state youth policy is one of the key priorities of the Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2017-2021.

LGBTI people face deep-rooted homophobia and discrimination. Consensual sexual relations between men are criminalized, with a maximum prison sentence of three years. The law does not criminalize same-sex sexual activity between women.<sup>74</sup>

## TASKS

In compliance with ADS 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID’s Program Cycle, and in accordance with other relevant guidelines, this analysis should be participatory and involve select mission staff at all stages of the process. The analysis will include a combination of a desk review, key informant interviews/focus groups, and/or site visits.

### A. Assessment Questions

The USAID/CA GSIA will:

- Identify gender and social inclusion gaps at the RDCS DO and IR level, and provide recommendations for USAID/CA on how to close them.
- Enable the RDCS to explicitly discuss how it will contribute to the three outcomes specified in the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy:
- Reductions in gaps between males and females in access to/control over economic, political, and social resources;
- Reductions in the prevalence of gender-based violence; and
- Reductions in constraints that prevent women and girls from leading, participating fully in, and influencing decisions in their societies.
- Provide illustrative performance and context indicators that track progress in closing identified gender and social inclusion gaps or achieving female empowerment objectives are in the Results Framework Indicators in Annex 3.

The assessment will be framed by the questions (AQs) and areas to explore provided in the RFTOP. The questions will be used to determine whom to interview, what types of questions to ask, and how the final report will be structured. In order to maximize understanding of the Central Asia gender and social inclusion landscape in which USAID/CA operates, the GSIA will consider the following five domains:

- **Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices That Influence the Context in which Men and Women Act and Make Decisions.** In addition to assessing gender legislation (e.g., laws on non-discrimination, gender equality, gender-based violence, and sexual harassment),

<sup>73</sup> Source of information - National Human Rights Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
[http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek\\_news/8099/](http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek_news/8099/)

<sup>74</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor - 2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.  
<https://uz.usembassy.gov/2017-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices-uzbekistan/>

the team will examine laws and policies addressing youth, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and the LGBTI population. The analysis will identify the extent to which laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices contain explicit gender biases (e.g., explicit provisions that treat males and females differently; laws and regulations that criminalize and/or restrict individuals on the basis of their gender identity or expression) or implicit gender biases (e.g., the different impacts of laws, policies, regulations, and practices on men and women because of different social arrangements and economic behavior).

- **Cultural Norms and Beliefs:** The team will determine how the gender stereotypes borne out of cultural norms and beliefs affect the status and behavior of men and women in the society, as well as their goals, aspirations, and access to opportunities and resources. This approach will also be applied to other disadvantaged groups.
- **Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use:** GSIA will explore how the dynamics between gender division of labor in a society, and gender roles and responsibilities, and time use during paid work, unpaid work (including care and other work in the home), and community service influence people's behavior and participation in development projects.
- **Access to and Control Over Assets and Resources:** The GSIA team will examine how access and capacity to use productive resources like assets (land, housing), income, social benefits (social insurance, pensions), public services (health, water), technology, and the information necessary to be a fully active and productive participant in society are affected by gender or membership in a marginalized group.
- **Patterns of Power and Decision-Making:** The GSIA will analyze levels of male and female participation and influence in senior decision-making positions, as political and business leaders, and in the USAID/CA priority sectors of investment in trade and markets, agriculture, energy and water, democratic institutions building, civil society, and social sector improvements (health and education). To the extent possible, youth, persons with disabilities, minorities and LGBTI will also be considered.

These above domains will be closely discussed with and approved by the Mission staff, whose participation, assistance, and knowledge will be an important part of this assessment.

## **B. Assessment Methodology**

In order to collect and analyze the information required to meet the goals of the GSIA, we propose a three-phase approach:

- Phase I (Initial Phase): Desk review and online survey development and administration (home-based)
- Phase II (Intermediate Phase): Stakeholder Consultations (field-based)
- Phase III (Final Phase): Data analysis, presentation and report writing (home-based) Initial Phase— Literature Review and Survey from Home Office
- Review the previous RDCS and its gender analysis. Create quantitative and qualitative baselines to enable capture of what has changed.
- Working with the Mission's Strategy and Program Office and the Contracting Officer Representative (COR), create a survey for USAID staff and partners on gender integration knowledge, attitudes, and practices.<sup>75</sup> The survey can also request input on how to incorporate gender and inclusive development into each development objective and intermediate result, and present specific questions you would like to be answered in the GSIA. Implementing partner travel is not required for the survey and can be aided by USAID in-country staff.
- Create a bibliography of proposed research materials for COR approval. Subsequently,
  - Conduct a desk review of relevant research and literature to identify the macro—and to the extent possible sectoral level—societal gender and social inclusion inequalities or obstacles

---

<sup>75</sup> Illustrative survey questions for USAID staff and IPs: What has changed in the last five years in terms of gender inequalities and social inclusion in respective countries? What have we learned about how to address these inequalities? What should our strategy's priorities be in addressing gender and social inclusion?

to female empowerment so that gender equality, female empowerment, and social inclusion can be reflected in the:

- RDCS Goals, Objectives, and Results Framework
  - RDCS Development Objectives (DOs)
  - RDCS Intermediate Results (IRs) and sub-Intermediate Results
  - Operating Unit's (OUs) Programming
- Conduct a desk review of available quantitative and qualitative data including studies and assessments conducted by donors, academia, private sector, and NGOs; survey reports; host country government reports; and national statistics documents. Include legislation, donor programming, local government and religious groups' efforts, the private sector, and other analyses.

### **Desk Review**

Reviewed documents will help the GSIA team understand and document how, and to what extent, discrimination based on gender or belonging to a marginalized group, is manifested regionally, and in the four countries specifically, and within the seven USAID/CA focus sectors. The bibliography of proposed research materials will be presented to the COR for approval. However, the team will approach this list as a living document and add new documents through the GSIA process. This is critical, as it is common for local stakeholders to share documents not readily available online or in English, but that provide valuable country or sector-specific information. All documents reviewed during the process will be presented in the Bibliography Annex in the final report.

Categories of documents the team expects to review are presented in the table below.

Document Category	Illustrative Example
USAID guidance on gender and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy</li> <li>• USAID LGBT Vision for Action</li> <li>• USAID Disability Policy</li> <li>• USAID Youth Policy</li> <li>• US Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally</li> <li>• The Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 205</li> </ul>
USAID/CA produced documents (USAID/CA RDCS, project documents, sector assessments, and gender-related evaluations conducted by USAID or its implementing partners (to be provided to the team by USAID/CA or obtained by team on DEC or online where available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAID/CA Mission Order on Gender and Inclusive Development</li> <li>• USAID/CA Regional Development Cooperation Strategy, 2015-2020</li> <li>• Existing Results Frameworks (including PMPs)</li> <li>• Tajikistan Feed the Future Strategy</li> <li>• Project/Activity Evaluations, Final Reports</li> <li>• USAID/CA Gender Assessment, 2009, 2014 (update)</li> <li>• USAID Youth Power Report, Tajikistan</li> </ul>

Document Category	Illustrative Example
Studies and assessments conducted by donors, academia, private sector, and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Gender Assessment, Kazakhstan, Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2013</li> <li>• Country Gender Assessment, Uzbekistan, Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2014</li> <li>• Country Gender Assessment, Tajikistan, Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2016</li> <li>• Tajikistan 2017 Human Rights Report</li> <li>• Submission on Tajikistan to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Human Rights Watch, October 15, 2018</li> <li>• Mapping the vulnerable and excluded groups of adolescents and youth in Tajikistan, Desk Study Report, UNICEF, UNDP Tajikistan, Dushanbe 2017</li> <li>• Gender Study for Central Asia, EuroPlus, 2017</li> </ul>
Host country government reports, legislation, surveys and national statistics documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2012</li> <li>• Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2017</li> </ul>
Scholarly articles on youth, gender, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI	

Each of the three GSIA team members will be responsible for reviewing an agreed upon segment of the documents. Preliminary findings of the literature review will be shared with USAID/CA during team’s briefing upon their arrival to Kazakhstan.

**GSIA Survey**

The team will develop an online survey with the purpose of gauging the respondents’ knowledge, attitudes, and practices on gender and social inclusion integration.

Considering the tight timeline and budget for the GSIA, the team is grateful for the availability of gender points of contact (POCs) in each country office. Their knowledge will assist the team with the survey implementation. However, taking into account the amount of time and coordination required to administer in-person surveys, we propose the survey be administered online via SurveyMonkey or Survey Gizmo. We believe that this is a more time and cost-efficient option, considering that: 1) time constraints on the gender focal points and survey participants would be minimal; 2) online surveys provide anonymity for survey takers. In turn, this encourages respondents to be frank and open, which may be compromised in a group setting—especially the concern with the IPs; and 3) the online survey allows for a straightforward and less time-consuming qualitative and quantitative data analysis than does an in-person administered survey.



## Survey outline

The survey will use both open and closed questions and will contain no more than 25 questions. The survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete online. The proposed outline of the survey is as follows:

**Part 1: Knowledge and attitudes about gender and social inclusion.** These questions will aim to assess the level of USAID/CA staff and IP knowledge on gender and social inclusion in terms of official U.S. Government (USG) guidance outlined in policies and ADS 205, as well as of national level gender and social inclusion laws and policies. The respondents will be asked if in the last five years these internal (USAID) and external (host country governments) factors have contributed to changes across sectors in gender equality and social inclusion in the last five years in each country and in the region. This section of the survey will be particularly useful in identifying the baseline and capturing reported changes that have taken place over the past five years.

**Part 2: Best practices and lessons learned in gender and social inclusion.** Questions in this section will serve as the basis for identifying best practices and lessons learned on programming in gender and inclusive development, both at the regional level and in each of the four countries. Respondents will also be asked to identify organizations at the forefront of this work in the region and each of the four countries.

**Part 3: Recommendations for gender and social inclusion in USAID/CA programming.** The staff and IP respondents will be able to provide their thoughts on how gender and social inclusion can be integrated into development objectives, intermediate results, and on USAID/CA's strategic priorities in this area.

Furthermore, they will be asked to provide recommendations for the type of support they would like to see from USAID/CA in creating an enabling environment for gender and inclusive development.

## Survey respondents

After the survey respondents have been identified, and with the assistance of each country office's gender POC and the COR's consent, the GSIA team will email them the survey link with a deadline for completion. The deadline will allow respondents enough time to take the survey when it is most convenient. If an individual does not meet the survey deadline, the GSIA team will notify either the relevant gender POC or the COR, requesting they send that individual a reminder email. If that individual is not able or willing to complete the survey, the gender POC can propose a different respondent. To the extent possible, gender balance will be taken into account in the selection of survey participants.

The table below outlines the proposed pool of survey participants:

Location of Respondent	Type/Category of Respondent	Total Number
USAID/CA (Kazakhstan)	Gender POC (LGBTI and persons with disabilities POC, where available)	1-3
	CORs/AORs; Technical and Program Officers (one per each of seven sectors)	Up to 7
	IP (the respondent should be either the COP or technical staff (gender and social COP or technical staff (gender and social	At least 2 (representing different sectors)
USAID Tajikistan Country Office	Gender POC (LGBTI and persons with disabilities POC, where available)	1-3
	CORs/AORs; Technical and Program Officers (one per each of seven sectors)	Up to 7
	IP (the respondent should be either the COP or technical staff (gender and social inclusion specialist)	At least 2 (representing different sectors)

Location of Respondent	Type/Category of Respondent	Total Number
USAID Turkmenistan Country Office	Gender POC (LGBTI and persons with disabilities POC, where available)	1-3
	CORs/AORs; Technical and Program Officers (one per each of seven sectors)	Up to 7
	IP (the respondent should be either the COP or technical staff (gender and social inclusion specialist))	At least 2 (representing different sectors)
USAID Uzbekistan Country Office	Gender POC (LGBTI and persons with disabilities POC, where available)	1-3
	CORs/AORs; Technical and Program Officers (one per each of seven sectors)	Up to 7
	IP (the respondent should be either the COP or technical staff (gender and social inclusion specialist))	At least 2 (representing different sectors)
<b>Total number of survey respondents</b>	.	<b>Up to 48</b>

The survey will be administered prior to team’s visit to Central Asia and will remain accessible to the selected participants for 14 days. The initial data analysis of survey results will be shared with USAID/CA during the team’s out-brief before their departure from Almaty.

During this phase the team will formulate its approach for the intermediate stage, including identifying the appropriate instruments to solicit information from stakeholders. Work under this phase must be finalized prior to arrival in Central Asia.

#### Intermediate Phase – Consultations in-country, where permitted and cost-effective

- With the initial phase complete and knowledge and data in hand, conduct an in-country briefing for USAID Central Asia leadership on the gender analysis work plan, process, timelines, and deliverables. To take place within the first two business days in-country.
- As permitted and cost-effective, and with the participation of select mission staff, conduct in-country consultations through interviews, focus groups, and/or site visits. All consultations and stakeholders must be approved by the COR. If in-country consultations are cost-prohibitive or not in the best interest of this analysis, the Contractor must find a reasonable and cost-effective way forward in consultation with the COR. Video conferencing is available at the mission, if needed.
- The Contractor and USAID/CA will work together to develop a list of key contacts, and USAID/CA will help arrange interviews or individual or focus groups with key contacts, as appropriate. The following is an illustrative list of agencies/individuals that could be interviewed or participate in cost-effective focus groups:
  - USAID Technical and Country Teams, Senior Management, Program Office, and Office of Acquisition and Assistance. Explore their perspectives on what has changed in terms of gender equality, social inclusion over the last five years. Ask: What has your team learned about trying to address gender and social inclusion? What are the opportunities to do more?
  - USAID implementing partners and beneficiaries. If possible, conduct site visits to conduct relevant discussions with activity staff, beneficiaries, local authorities and institutions, etc. Ask: What have you learned about integrating gender into your work? What are the challenges? What are the opportunities to do more?
  - Major donor or international organizations which have important gender programs in CA countries: World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, ADB, IOM, EBRD;
  - NGOs/CSOs, private sector;
  - Members of National Commissions on Women Affairs (in all four countries), where permitted;

- U.S. Embassies in Central Asia: Political and Economic Sections, Public Affairs Section, US Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), International Narcotics and Law (INL), and others
- Government officials: if approved and possible, including ministries working on youth, social inclusion, and/or minority inclusion.
- Lastly, debriefing session with USAID staff on preliminary results. Work with the COR to identify when and with whom the debriefing will take place, and what is the preferred timing and format for the debriefing, and whether and when USAID would like to receive a draft of the debriefing presentation (prior to the presentation itself).

### Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Using a purposive sampling approach, the GSIA team and USAID/CA will work together to identify key informants. Purposive sampling will allow us to make the selection based on relevant characteristics and respondent availability. Since such sampling is vulnerable to bias, the team will take this into consideration when conducting data analysis.

USAID/CA will help arrange individual interviews with key contacts, as appropriate. The individuals who already provided their feedback in the online survey will not be chosen for KIIs. As with the selection of survey participants, gender balance will be taken into account with the selection of KII participants.

The illustrative categories of KII respondents include:

- USAID Technical and Country Teams, Senior Management, Program Office, and Office of Acquisition and Assistance. Representation across seven sectors will be considered;
- Major donor or international organizations implementing gender programs in CA countries (World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, ADB, IOM, EBRD);
- NGOs/CSOs;
- Private sector representatives;
- Members of National Commissions on Women Affairs (in all four countries), where permitted;
- U.S. Embassies in Central Asia: Political and Economic Sections, Public Affairs Section, US Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), International Narcotics and Law (INL), and others
- Government officials, including ministries working on youth, social inclusion, and/or minority inclusion (if approved and possible)

### Focus Group Discussions

Considering team's time constraints in each country, we propose FGDs with the IPs in each country (some individual IP feedback will have already been obtained through their survey participation.) When based on sectors, FGDs with the IPs will provide for a lively discussion and allow for sharing of information and learning about each other's approaches and challenges in addressing gender and social inclusion gaps via their individual activities. The team proposes one to two FGDs in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, each covering as many sectors as possible, totaling between three and six FGDs. Each FGD will have no more than six participants and each participant will be either an activity leader (CoP/DCoP) or a technical staff member (gender and inclusion specialist). The team will rely on gender POCs and the COR to identify potential IPs and invite them to participate in FGDs via their activity's CORs/AORs. If there is a particular IP whose feedback USAID/CA would particularly like but who is unable to participate in FGDs, the team will conduct a KII with that respondent. As the team will not travel to Turkmenistan, no FGDs will be held there.

### Site visits

The GSIA team will attempt to conduct one site visit per country. The team will rely on gender PoCs and/or relevant CORs/AORs to assist with this. However, considering the tight timeline, site visits may not be feasible.

### KII and FGD interview guides

The team will develop a standardized interview guide for KIIs and FGDs, which will ensure that there is overall consistency across participants and locations. However, considering that KIIs and FGDs will be held with several types of stakeholders (i.e., USAID staff, IPs, national governments, NGOs, donors, etc.), in four different country contexts, and will focus on seven sectors, questions asked will need to be varied. The interview guides will be developed within the context of five domains of gender analysis presented in ADS 205. For Illustrative Questions that will serve as an interview guide for general KII discussion, please see Annex 3, which provides an overview of types of questions that may be asked of different groups of stakeholders and their relationship with the five domains of GSIA.

Final Phase – Report writing from home office

#### **IV. RESULTS AND GOALS**

This analysis must provide macro- and, to the extent possible, sector-level quantitative and qualitative information on the key gender and social inclusion development gaps in each of the domains described in ADS 205.3.2 related to sectors included in the next RDCS' Results Framework and where mission resources are likely to be concentrated. USAID will integrate findings and recommendations from the GSIA throughout its RDCS and subsequently to aide in gender analyses for future design approvals and activity documents.

**[END OF SECTION C]**

## ANNEX 2: ILLUSTRATIVE PERFORMANCE AND CONTEXT INDICATORS

The illustrative gender-sensitive performance and context indicators below can be considered at the DO, IR, and Sub-IR levels of the Results Framework, and will need to be refined when USAID develops the RDCS Performance Management Plan. The vast majority of the indicators below comes from the list of standard foreign assistance indicators (F indicators) (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/f/indicators/>). It is the opinion of the GSIA team that there is no need to reinvent the wheel in development of indicators for this RDCS. The examples below show that there is a plethora of gender-sensitive F indicators that each sector can use or adapt to fit the local context. Additional useful indicator resources include:

- UNDP, A Set of Proposed Indicators for the LGBTI Inclusion Index, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/lgbti-index.html>
- ADB, Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators, <https://www.adb.org/documents/tool-kit-gender-equality-results-and-indicators>

### I. Economic Growth

#### *Investment and Trade*

- Person hours of training completed in trade and investment supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 2.1)
- Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created with USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 3)
- Number of households with formalized land with USG assistance, disaggregated by sex of title holder and type of title (joint vs. individual) (EG 3)
- Number of households who have obtained documented property rights as result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 10.4)
- Number of people with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights as secure, as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and type of title (joint vs. individual) (EG 10.4)
- Total number of clients benefiting from financial services provided through USG-assisted financial intermediaries, including non-financial institutions or actors, disaggregated by sex (EG 4)
- Number of days of USG-funded training provided to support microenterprise development, disaggregated by sex (EG 4)
- Full-time equivalent employment of firms assisted under USG programs, disaggregated by sex (EG 5)
- Person hours of training completed by policymakers regarding the registration and operation of micro or small enterprises supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 5)
- Person hours of training completed in business enabling environment supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 5.1)
- Percentage of registered enterprises that are owned or managed by women (micro, small, and medium-sized) (ADB Gender Indicators Toolkit)
- Share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector (EG 6)
- Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment) (GNDR-2)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming (GNDR-3)
- Number of new businesses established based on a new technology or innovation, disaggregated by sex of business owner (STIR)
- Person hours of training completed in science and technology workforce supported by the USG, disaggregated by sex (STIR)

### *Energy*

- Number of individuals attending tertiary education institutions with USG scholarship or financial assistance, disaggregated by sex (ES 2)
- Number of beneficiaries with improved energy services due to USG assistance, disaggregated by sex and type of energy (clean vs. non-clean) (EG 7.1)
- Person hours of training completed in technical energy fields supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 7.3)
- Number of people trained in technical energy fields supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 7.3)
- Number of people trained in clean energy supported by USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (EG 12)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming (GNDR-3)
- Number and percentage of women and men with increased incomes due to improved energy facilities and services (ADB Gender Indicator Toolkit)

### *Water*

- Number of people educated on tools, approaches, and/or methods for water security, integrated water resource management, and/or water source protection as a result of USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (HL 8.3)
- Number of individuals attending tertiary education institutions with USG scholarship or financial assistance, disaggregated by sex (ES 2)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming (GNDR-3)

## **2. Democracy and Governance**

### *Civil Society*

- Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women (DR 4-1)
- Number of human rights organizations trained and supported (DR 4-2) (Disaggregated by: Number of groups working on LGBTI issues and Number of women's rights groups)
- Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions (DR 4-2) (Disaggregated by: Number of groups working on LGBTI issues, Number of groups working on disability rights, and Number of women's rights groups)
- Number of USG-assisted civil society organizations (CSOs) that participate in legislative proceedings and/or engage in advocacy with national legislature and its committees (DR 4-3) (Disaggregated by: Number of groups working on LGBTI issues, Number of groups working on disability rights, and Number of women's rights groups)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming (GNDR-3)
- Number of laws, policies, or procedures adopted and implemented with USG assistance designed to promote and improve youth participation at the regional, national or local level (YOUTH)
- Number of youth at risk of violence trained in social or leadership skills through USG assisted programs, disaggregated by sex and age (YOUTH)

### *Media*

- Number of training days provided to journalists with USG assistance, measured by person-days of training, disaggregated by sex (DR 5-2)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming (GNDR-3)

### *Justice and Governance*

- The number of host nation criminal justice personnel who received USG-funded anti-TIP training during the life of a project, disaggregated by sex (PS 5.2)
- Number of judicial personnel trained with USG assistance, disaggregated by sex (DR1)
- Number of judicial personnel trained on GBV legislation and procedures, disaggregated by sex
- Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to sexual and gender-based violence at the national or sub-national level (GNDR-5)
- Number of people reached by a USG-funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other), disaggregated by sex (GNDR-6)
- Percentage of participants that view Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming (GNDR-7)
- Number of USG-supported Public Sessions Held Regarding Proposed Changes to the Country's Legal Framework, disaggregated by sex (DR 1)
- Number of laws or constitutional amendments that protect fundamental freedoms and are consistent with international human rights standards adopted with USG support (DR1)
- Number of activities supported with USG assistance that are designed to retain women or recruit women into positions within the national or local government. (DR 2)
- Number of individuals from low-income or marginalized communities who received legal aid or victim's assistance with USG support (DR 6) (Disaggregated by sex, participants self-identifying as a member of the LGBTI community, number of persons with disabilities, number of ethnic minorities)
- Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed or adopted with USG assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls at the national or sub-national level (GNDR-1)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming (GNDR-3)
- Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities, disaggregated by sex (GNDR-4)
- Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations, disaggregated by sex (GNDR-8)

#### *CVE*

- Number of individuals in the civilian sector trained on counterterrorism financed by USG programs, disaggregated by sex (PS 1.1)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming (GNDR-3)

#### *CTIP*

- The number of victims of TIP receiving services with USG assistance, disaggregated by sex, age, and type of victim (labor vs. sex trafficking) (PS.5.1)
- Percentage of TIP victims who are served in programs created, run, and/or assisted by USG funding, disaggregated by sex, age, and type of victim (labor vs. sex trafficking) (PS 5.1)
- The number of host nation criminal justice personnel who received USG-funded anti-TIP training during the life of a project, disaggregated by sex (PS 5.2)
- Percent change of target population that shows an awareness of trafficking in persons (TIP), disaggregated by sex and age (PS 5.3)
- The number of people in targeted populations, including vulnerable populations, law enforcement, health care providers, educators, and others, exposed to a USG-funded mass media campaign that provides information about TIP (PS 5.3)
- Percentage of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming (GNDR-3)



### **3. Health**

#### *TB*

- Number of individuals trained in any component of the WHO Stop TB Strategy with USG funding, disaggregated by sex (HL 2.1)
- Number of vulnerable/hard-to-reach populations with access to TB diagnosis and treatment services (RDCS 2015-2019)

#### *HIV*

- Number of people reached by a USG funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other), disaggregated by sex (GNDR-6)
- Number of most-at-risk populations with access to HIV prevention and treatment services (RDCS 2015-2019)

### **4. Education**

- Proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text, disaggregated by sex (RDCS 2015-2019)

### ANNEX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdykalikova, Gulshara. "State Secretary of the Republic of Kazakhstan Charts the Country's Challenging Journey on the Road to Gender Equality," Last modified November 30, 2018. <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/kazakhstan-challenging-road-to-gender-equality/55185>
- Akhmedova, Elena. 2019. "EBRD Launches Women in Business Programme in Tajikistan." European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). September 26, 2019. <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2017/EBRD-launches-Women-in-Business-programme-in-Tajikistan>.
- ALMA-TQ. "Violations by Kazakhstan of the Right of Transgender Persons to Legal Recognition of Gender Identity." Submitted for consideration at the 117th Session of the Human Rights Committee, Geneva, June-July 2016.
- Amnesty International. "Less Equal: LGBTI Human Rights Defenders in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan." 2017.
- Amnesty International. "'We Are Like Dead Souls.' Life without Legal Capacity in Kazakhstan." 2018.
- Asian Development Bank. *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*. December 2018.
- Asian Development Bank, *Tajikistan: Country Gender Assessment, 2016*: 14, 15.
- Asian Development Bank. *Turkmenistan, 2017–2021 — Catalyzing Regional Cooperation and Integration, and Economic Diversification*. 2017.
- Asia Development Bank. *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*. Update. December 2018.
- Avert, "HIV and AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview," January 18, 2019, <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>.
- Bell, Dylan. "Samruk-Energy signs UN Women's Empowerment Principles," ERBD, March 7, 2019, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/samrukenergy-signs-un-womens-empowerment-principles.html>.
- BioDiversity International. "Improving Seed systems for smallholder farmers' food security" program: Integrating gender in the project's research activities. 2018.
- "British Embassy in Turkmenistan launches a project to support local start-ups and young entrepreneurs," *Strategeast*, July 26, 2019, <https://www.strategeast.org/british-embassy-in-turkmenistan-launches-a-project-to-support-local-start-ups-and-young-entrepreneurs/>
- Chumachenko, Alexandr. "Rules for employing disabled people in Kazakhstan," *IUS Laboris*, August 1, 2017, <https://theword.iuslaboris.com/hrlaw/insights/rules-for-employing-disabled-people-in-kazakhstan>.
- CEDAW. *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. Fifth periodic report of States parties due in 2016: Turkmenistan*. November 2016.
- "CEDAW discusses with civil society organizations the situation of women in New Zealand, Turkmenistan, and State of Palestine," UN OHCHR, July 9, 2018. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23349&LangID=E>.
- Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network. *Human Rights Violation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in Uzbekistan*. UN Human Rights Committee. 2015.
- Closing Remarks by President Rahmon, National Development Forum and Development Forum, 2018.
- "Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviews the report of Turkmenistan," UN OHCHR, July 10, 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23355&LangID=E>.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Uzbekistan (2015). *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*. November 2015.

Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. “On Approval of the Concept of Strengthening the Institution of the Family in the Republic of Uzbekistan.” Last modified June 29, 2018. <http://lex.uz/ru/docs/3797628>

Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. “On Measures to Radically Improve the System of State Support for Persons with Disabilities.” Last modified December 4, 2017. <http://lex.uz/docs/3436196>

Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS*, 2012, <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-384.cfm>.

Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS*, 2017 <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-521.cfm>.

Eliseera, Ekaterina. “Budget for TB treatment increased in Kazakhstan in 2019,” *Kazpravda*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.kazpravda.kz/en/news/society/budget-for-tb-treatment-increased-in-kazakhstan-in-2019>.

Elshimi, Mohammed S, Raffaello Pantucci, Sarah Lain, and Nadine L Salman. 2018. “Understanding the Factors Contributing to Radicalisation Among Central Asian Labour Migrants in Russia.” Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

Equal Rights Trust. “After the Padishah: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Uzbekistan.” 2016.

The Equality Institute, *The Sample Survey on Domestic Violence*, 2017.

ESCAP. *Examining Women’s Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.

Europlus. *Gender Study for Central Asia: Kazakhstan Final Report*. November 2017.

FAO, *National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Tajikistan*, 2016.

FAO, *Publication Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia* 2018. 2018.

*Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan*. 2019. Budapest, Hungary: FAO.

*Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment Series*. March 2019.

“Gender indicators in Dehkan Farms in Russian,” Statistics Agency under the President of RT, 2018.

The Global Fund. *Technical Brief: Tuberculosis, Gender and Human Rights*. April 2017.

Global Health Research Center of Central Asia, “UNI Project – At risk men’s involvement in HIV treatment continuum in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2017-2021),” 2019, [https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page\\_id=361](https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page_id=361).

The Government of Kazakhstan. *Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016*.

The Government of Tajikistan, 6th periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017: *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

The Government of Turkmenistan. *Voluntary National Review: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*. 2019.

“GWP CACENA Joins International Women’s Day Campaign,” GWP, Last modified March 9, 2019, <https://www.gwp.org/en/CACENA/News/gwp-cacena-joins-international-womens-day-campaign>.

Holzhaecker, Hans, and Dana Skakova. *Turkmenistan Diagnostic*. EBRD. May 2019.

Hug, Adam. “Introduction: Putting the spotlight on Turkmenistan,” Foreign Policy Centre, July 12, 2019, <https://fpc.org.uk/introduction-putting-the-spotlight-on-turkmenistan/>.

- Human Rights Watch. “On the Margins’: Education for Children with Disabilities in Kazakhstan.” 2019.
- Human Rights Watch. *Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights, Alternative Report*, Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2018.
- Human Rights Watch. “We Can’t Refuse to Pick Cotton.” Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan. 2017.
- ICAP, “Women Help Women Overcome HIV Stigma in Kazakhstan, with ICAP’s Support,” March 5, 2019, <https://icap.columbia.edu/women-help-women-to-overcome-hiv-stigma-in-kazakhstan-with-icaps-support/>.
- ICJ. “Women’s Access to Justice in Kazakhstan: Identifying the Obstacles & Need for Change.” 2013.
- International Relief, *Working with families to prevent violence against women and girls in Tajikistan: Evidence Brief*. 2018
- International Women’s Rights Project. *Smart Waters Project Gender Scoping Status Report*. October 2018.
- Internews, “Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign Led by Local Media in Kazakhstan Leads to Demands for Policy Change,” April 1, 2019. <https://internews.org/updates/anti-sexual-harassment-campaign-led-local-media-kazakhstan-leads-demands-policy-change>.
- IPHR, *Tajikistan: Failure to Protect Women from Domestic Violence*, Joint NGO submission to CEDAW ahead of 71st Session. October 2018.
- IWPR, *The Situation of the Civil society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan*, 2018.
- Junisbai, Barbara, and Azamat Junisbai. 2018. “Are Youth Different? The Nazarbayev Generation and Public Opinion in Kazakhstan.” *Problems of Post-Communism*, October. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1520602>. “Kazakhstan Boosts Youth Policy Implementation with New Road Map.” 2018. Kazinform. November 25, 2018. [https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map\\_a3463779](https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map_a3463779).
- Khitarishvili, T. *Gender Inequalities in Labour Markets in Central Asia*. UNDP, 2016.
- Kikuta, Haruka. 2019. “Mobile phones and self-determination among Muslim youth in Uzbekistan.” *Central Asian Survey*, 38 (2): 181-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2019.1584603>.
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of the Equal Right and Opportunities for Men and Women.” Last modified May 8, 2019. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3220>
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence.” Last modified May 21, 2019. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3338>.
- Lopez Noriega, Isabel. 2016. “Improving Seed Systems for Smallholder Farmers’ Food Security.” Bioversity International. 2016. <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/e-library/publications/detail/improving-seed-systems-for-smallholder-farmers-food-security-report-of-the-mid-term-workshop-of-th/>.
- Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2019.
- Mynbayeva, Jans. *Wonder Foundation Insight Report: Women in Kazakhstan*. Wonder Foundation, (n.d).
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee. *Women: Turkmenistan’s second-class citizens: Equal only to injustice and vulnerable to arbitrariness*. 2013.
- OECD. “Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan. A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities,” 2017.
- OECD Eurasia, *Draft Background Note: Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia Better Policies for Women’s Economic Empowerment*, 2019.

- OECD. OECD Gender Policy Delivery Review: Kazakhstan: Highlights, 2017.
- OECD. *Social Institutions & Gender Index for Kazakhstan*, 2019.
- OECD. *Social Institutions & Gender Index for Turkmenistan*. 2019.
- Omaleki, V. and Elizabeth Reed. *The role of gender in health outcomes among women in Central Asia: a narrative review of the literature*. In *Women's Studies International Forum* 72 (2019).
- OSCE, "Women, water and security," August 12, 2015, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/176671>.
- OSCE, "Youth and the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Workshop on Perspectives from Central Asia," 2017, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/315296>.
- Pannier, Bruce. "Paying To Stay Disabled In Turkmenistan," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 24, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-disabled-state-subsidies-cutbacks/28994142.html>.
- Podzic, Mersiha Causevic. "Empowering women water professionals - #WorldWaterDay," March 18, 2016, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/228816>.
- "Private sector of Turkmenistan embarks on implementation of SDGs adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind," UNDP, August 30, 2018, <http://www.tm.undp.org/content/turkmenistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/undp-Career-Fair-for-people-with-disabilities.html>.
- Project Hope. Kazakhstan, Last modified November 10, 2010, <https://www.projecthope.org/kazakhstan/>.
- "Social Assistance for Disabled Persons," egov.KZ, Last modified June 20, 2019, <https://egov.kz/cms/en/articles/invalids>
- Solod, Darina. "In Uzbekistan, Women's Rights are Changing - but Not Fast Enough," Open Democracy, July 4, 2018. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/uzbekistan-gender-inequality-violence-en/>
- The State Committee of Statistics of Turkmenistan and UNICEF. 2016. *2015-2016 Turkmenistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Final Report*. 2016.
- Stevan Weine and Eric Rosand, "Repatriating ISIS Families: An Opportunity to Show that 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism' Can Work," Just Security, June 14, 2019, <https://www.justsecurity.org/64567/repatriating-isis-families-an-opportunity-to-show-that-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-can-work/>.
- Stop TB, "Kazakhstan: Tuberculosis Situation in 2017," Last modified June 19, 2017, [http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ\\_Dashboard.html](http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ_Dashboard.html).
- Student Energy Challenge, Kazenergy, 2019, <http://kazenergyforum.com/en/student-energy-challenge>.
- Switzerland Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, "Prevention of Domestic Violence in Tajikistan," August 4, 2019, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/state-economic-reforms/development-human-rights.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/1999/7F00398/phase8>.
- "Tajikistan Country Report." Nations in Transit 2018. Freedom House. October 2, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/tajikistan>.
- "Tajikistan." n.d. World Data Atlas. Knoema. <https://knoema.com/atlas/Tajikistan>.
- Trafficking in persons report 2018, U.S. Embassy, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.
- Tsay, Elena. "Gender awareness in water and waste in Central Asia." Presented at UNESCO Tashkent Office, August 27, 2017.
- Turdiev, Mirjahan. *Changing traditions by following traditions: Disability inclusive development in Uzbekistan*, 2015.
- "Turkmenistan joins global initiative to stop violence against women," Orient, November 11, 2018. <https://orient.tm/en/turkmenistan-joins-global-initiative-to-stop-violence-against-women/>

UNAIDS, UNAIDS Data 2019.

UNDP. Gender Equality in Public Administration: Snapshot of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. October 2017.

UNDP, Human Development Report 2018, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KAZ>.

UNDP, *Human Development Indices and Indicators: Statistical Update*, 2018.

UNDP, *National Report on Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.  
<http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/library/poverty/national-report-on-implementation-of-strategic-documents-of-the-.html>

UNDP, Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia, Regional Brief 2018.

UNDP Tajikistan, *Women Empowerment in Tajikistan – Stories of Change*, 2016.

“UNDP to Promote Creating Opportunities for Women in Energy Sector in Tajikistan.” 2018. UNDP  
<http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/12/undp-to-promote-creating-opportunities-for-women-in-energy-secto.html>.

UNICEF. *Analysis of Situation of Children’s and Women’s Rights in Turkmenistan*. 2019.

USAID, “About: Engendering Utilities,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.

USAID, *Central Asia Regional Mission Gender Programming Fact Sheet*.

USAID, Gender and Youth Inclusion Strategy: USAID Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity in Tajikistan, August 2018.

USAID, “Kazakhstan: Global Health,” May 7, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/kazakhstan/global-health>.

USAID/Central Asia. An Overview on Women-Owned Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) across Central Asia: USAID Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Activity in Central Asia (draft). July 2019.

USAID/Central Asia. *Agricultural Value Chain Project Gender Strategy*. September 2016.

USAID/Central Asia. Central Asia Region Energy Links Project, Gender Assessment, 2018.

USAID/Central Asia. *DGO CS PAD Annex D Gender Assessment*.

USAID/Central Asia. *FY 2018 Turkmenistan Gender Key Issues*.

USAID/Central Asia. *Gender Analysis for USAID Kyrgyz Republic*. August 2013.

USAID/Central Asian Republics. *Gender Assessment*. 2010.

USAID/Central Asia. *Integrating Gender: USAID Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs Activity in Central Asia*, 2019.

USAID/Central Asia. *Mission Order # 207 Gender and Inclusive Development*.

USAID/Central Asian Republics. *Regional Development Cooperation Strategy, FY 2015-FY 2019*.

USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Kazakhstan, 2012*.

USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Kyrgyzstan 2012*.

USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Turkmenistan 2012*.

USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Uzbekistan, 2012*.

USAID/Central Asia. *TKO GSP Gender Activities March 2019*.

USAID/Central Asia. *USAID Indicator References for Performance Management Plan (PMP) FY 2015-FY 2019*.

USAID/Central Asia, Workshop on “Gender integration to the energy sector of Central Asian countries,” August 10, 2018, <http://ptfcar.org/en/blog/2018/10/workshop-on-gender-integration-to-energy-sector-of-central-asian-countries/>.

United States Department of State. Kazakhstan 2018 Human Rights Report. 2018.

United States Department of State, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Kazakhstan, June 28, 2018. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b09a.html>.

United States Department of State. 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report Tajikistan. 2019. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/tajikistan/>.

United States Department of State, 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan. 2019.

United States Department of State. Turkmenistan 2018 Human Rights Report. 2018.

United States Department of State. Uzbekistan Human Rights Report 2018.

UN Women, “Kazakhstan’s domestic violence crisis centres save lives, need funds,” 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/11/kazakhstan-domestic-violence-crisis-centres-save-lives-need-funds>.

UN Women, “Kazakhstan’s new plan to end domestic violence demonstrates multi-disciplinary action,” 2017. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/8/feature-kazakhstans-plan-to-end-domestic-violence-demonstrates-multi-disciplinary-action>.

UN Women. Women and Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia: Executive Summary and Recommendations. June 2017.

U.S. Mission Uzbekistan. “2018 Trafficking in Persons Report: Uzbekistan.” U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan. July 9, 2018. <https://uz.usembassy.gov/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report-uzbekistan/>.

“Vocational Courses.” 2018. NABWT. September 18, 2018. <http://nabwt.tj/vocational-courses/>.

“‘We Can’t Refuse to Pick Cotton’: Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan.” 2019. Human Rights Watch. January 2, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/27/we-cant-refuse-pick-cotton/forced-and-child-labor-linked-world-bank-group>.

WHO. Compendium of good practices in the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region, 2018.

WHO. Global Tuberculosis Report 2018.

Women in Energy: UNECE Supports Strengthened Capacities and Knowledge Among Officials and Stakeholders from Central Asia,” UNECE, (n.d), <https://www.unece.org/info/media/news/sustainable-energy/2018/women-in-energy-unece-supports-strengthened-capacities-and-knowledge-among-officials-and-stakeholders-from-central-asia/doc.html>.

Women Water Forum, Bridging Voices to Actions: Synthesis Report, June 19, 2018.

World Bank. “Poverty and Equity”. Country Dashboard: Kazakhstan. 2016.

World Economic Forum. The Global Gender Gap Report 2018.

“Youth Is a Great Power That Ensures Economic Growth in the Country.” The National Human Rights Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan. August 13, 2018. [http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek\\_news/8099/](http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek_news/8099/).

“Youth Policy of Kazakhstan: State Programs, Values and Socialization.” 2018. Strategy2050.KZ. [https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth\\_policy\\_of\\_kazakhstan\\_state\\_programs\\_values\\_and\\_socialization\\_\\_\\_51269](https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth_policy_of_kazakhstan_state_programs_values_and_socialization___51269).

Yussupjanov, Parkhat. "In Kazakhstan, Having a Disability Often Means Not Getting a Vote," Open Society Foundations, November 16, 2016. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/kazakhstan-having-disability-often-means-not-getting-vote>.

"Zangar," International Youth Foundation, 2017, <https://www.iyfnet.org/initiatives/zangar>



## ANNEX 4: GSIA COUNTRY REPORT – KAZAKHSTAN

### CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary .....	49
2.	Introduction .....	50
3.	Methodology and Limitations.....	50
4.	Enabling environment for gender equality and social inclusion .....	51
4.1	Gender Equality.....	51
4.2	People with Disabilities .....	53
4.3	LGBTI .....	53
4.4	Youth.....	54
4.5	Gender-Based Violence.....	55
5.	Findings by Sector.....	56
5.1	Economic Growth .....	57
5.1.1	Trade and Markets .....	57
5.1.2	Energy.....	59
5.1.3	Water .....	61
5.2	Democracy and Governance .....	62
5.2.1	Civil Society.....	62
5.2.2	Justice and Governance.....	62
5.2.3	Media .....	63
5.2.4	Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).....	64
5.2.5	Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP).....	65
5.3	Health .....	66
5.3.1	Tuberculosis.....	66
5.3.2	HIV/AIDS .....	66
6.	Recommendations .....	68
	Annex 1: Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis Domains .....	72
	Annex 2: Bibliography.....	77
	Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews .....	80

## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
A2I	Access to Information
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARGO	Civil Society Development Organization
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
CA	Central Asia
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CTIP	Countering Trafficking in Persons
CTJ	Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Program
CRPD	Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAR	Dignity and Rights
DV	Domestic Violence
EACU	Eurasian Customs Union
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GoK	Government of Kazakhstan
GSIA	Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis
GWP CACENA	Global Water Partnership Central Asia and Caucasus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MDR	Multi Drug-Resistant
MSM	Men Who Have Sex With Men
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PLWHIV	People Living With HIV
PtF	Power the Future
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
RCDS	Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WHO	World Health Organization

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kazakhstan is by far the most advanced in gender equality and social inclusion out of the four countries analyzed here. It ranks very well in many international gender equality indices, with a weakness in two areas—number of women in parliament and women in labor force participation. In fact, the perception that Kazakh women have attained equal status, when in reality barriers to their advancement and gender stereotypes still exist, is often an obstacle to gender equality.

The country has advanced gender equality and social inclusion legislation, with several issues that still need addressing, namely lack of legal definition of “discrimination,” and absence of anti-sexual harassment legislation. Unlike the other countries in the region, Kazakhstan has the financial means to implement many of its gender equality goals and commitments, but it is lacking political will to become more inclusive, which would help it to reach its goal of becoming one of the 30 most developed countries by 2050. Perhaps the most obvious example of this lack of political will is the country’s weak national gender machinery, led by the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. This organ does not have any executive power and is more a service provider than an influencer at the policy level.

Low political will for inclusion is also evident in the Government of Kazakhstan’s (GoK) lack of efforts to address gender stereotypes that perpetuate the inferior status of women in society. These stereotypes begin in childhood and are most visibly reflected in types of fields of study boys and girls choose. Sex disaggregation in education leads to sex disaggregation in the labor force, resulting in women working in lower paid positions and sectors, and generally holding non-decision-making positions, while also being primary care takers of children and households. One of the main obstacles to women’s participation in the workforce is the lack of adequate and affordable childcare.

Along with gender stereotypes, stigma is attached to groups who are in some way “different” than the mainstream society—people with disabilities, people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), gender-based violence (GBV), and trafficking victims, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) population. This results in discrimination, mistreatment, and even violence. Protecting vulnerable populations and creating an enabling environment for them would go a long way in GoK’s fulfillment of its national and international commitments and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, while some advancements have been made in addressing the needs of people with disabilities, basic accessible infrastructure that would enable them to be mobile and independent in public spaces is sorely lacking across the country. Other areas of concern include insufficient government investment into reproductive health and sexuality education, leading to high abortion rates; low usage of contraception; and transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV; insufficient attention paid to the complexities of migration and trafficking; and weak GBV prevention and response protocols and systems.

Considering Kazakhstan’s more “advanced” status in many areas concerning gender and social inclusion, compared to other United States Agency for International Development Central Asia (USAID/CA) countries, USAID can choose strategic yet powerful interventions to help Kazakhstan advance in an inclusive way on their journey to self-reliance. Suggestions of such interventions include:

### Economic Growth

- Support female entrepreneurs in non-traditional fields.
- Support female entrepreneurs with disability.
- Support scholarships for young women in the energy sector.
- Support women’s networks in sustainable energy.
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at Samruk-Energy and its subsidiaries.
- Enhance women’s decision-making in cooperatives and water-user groups.
- Support media campaigns and awareness raising about women’s role in integrated water resource management (IWRM).

## Democracy and Governance

- Begin meaningful and strategic engagement with LGBTI groups and organizations.
- Explore strategies to bring more youth and men into the sector.
- Support development of anti-sexual harassment legislation.
- Support quality local media content creation and campaigns to address gender stereotypes in Kazakh language.
- Award a grant to a non-governmental organization (NGO) to develop media skills in youth and link them with internships at media outlets.
- Include a countering violent extremism (CVE) component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking.
- Support a study on gender dynamics of trafficking and migration.
- Support the GoK's engagement with regional governments on migration.
- Support the GoK to improve and adjust its legal and policy environment for migrants.

## Health

- Use existing program opportunities to address the stigma and gender barriers associated with tuberculosis (TB) among medical professionals.
- Support efforts to educate young people about reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STIs, and GBV.
- Support education and health care professionals in dealing with HIV+ vulnerable populations.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan country reports are the main building blocks for the overarching Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA) report for USAID/CA's new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS).

Country-level findings in these four reports demonstrate how men and women are faring in their respective countries, and what challenges they are facing, along with vulnerable groups that include people with disabilities; LGBTI persons; youth; and ethnic and religious minorities, where applicable. Gaps identified in these reports provide the basis for recommendations for USAID's actions in each respective country. The findings in this report are presented sectorally, however additional presentation of findings through the lens of five domains of gender analysis is in Annex I.

## **3. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS**

The GSIA team conducted a desk review of relevant documents (Annex 2), and conducted 23 interviews with diverse stakeholders in Almaty, in person, and via Skype/phone (Annex 3). In addition, the team held a focus group discussion with the Mission's Inclusive Development Working Group. Results from the staff and implementing partner (IP) GSIA survey were also taken into account in the development of this report. Limitations included unavailability of respondents, as many were away on leave, which was also reflected in the low survey turnout rate. The team noted that presence of USAID staff in some interviews might have influenced the types of answers provided by the respondents, especially by the IPs. Although the team made it clear that the purpose of the interviews was not to evaluate their activities, the IPs would often, if USAID staff were present, focus on presenting their project's gender-related accomplishments, rather than on providing more tailored answers to the questions asked. Without the presence of USAID staff, the respondents seemed more relaxed, and the conversations were able to flow in a more informal manner.

## 4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 4.1 Gender Equality

Kazakhstan is an upper middle-income country, which reduced its poverty rate from 46.7 percent in 2001 to 2.7 percent in 2015.<sup>76</sup> It is determined to become one of the 30 most developed countries in the world by 2050. The median age of its population of 18.3 million is 30.3 years and over half (52 percent) are women.<sup>77</sup> The country has reached near gender parity in education, with 99.7 percent of adult women having reached at least a secondary level of education compared with 100 percent of their male counterparts; it has also reduced maternal mortality from 65 for every 100,000 live births in 2000 to 12 in 2015.<sup>78</sup> However, challenges to gender equality are present in other aspects, including political participation and access to economic opportunities, equal wages, and decision-making positions. Currently, women represent 27.6 percent of the members of the Lower House of the Parliament and make up 22.2 percent in local representative bodies. In addition, they only represent about 28 percent of the directors of Kazakh small and medium-sized (SMEs).<sup>79</sup>

Kazakhstan has strong legal commitment to equality and non-discrimination. Its Constitution guarantees equal rights to all. Since 2009, the *Law of State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* has been in effect. It established the legal principle of equal rights, by identified spheres in which gender discrimination is prohibited, which include the civil service, the labor market, health care, education, and the family. The country is in the process of developing anti-discrimination legislation,<sup>80</sup> since there is no comprehensive definition of discrimination at this time. Kazakhstan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1998.

**Table I: Gender Equality International Indices Rankings for Kazakhstan**

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Gender Development Index (GDI) (2018)	Male-female achievement ratio in: health; education; and command over economic resources. (Group 1 – high equality; group 2 – medium-high equality; group 3 – medium equality; group 4 – medium-low equality; group 5 countries – low equality)	1.007 – Group 1 – high achievement
UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2018)	Five indicators: maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rate, seats in the national Parliament, population with at least secondary education, and labor force participation. Measurement is between 0 and 1. The higher the GII value, the more disparities between females and males.	0.197 KZ scores low on Parliamentary seats and labor market participation
OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (2019)	Five dimensions: 1) discriminatory family code, 2) restricted physical integrity, 3) son bias, 4) restricted resources and assets, and 5) restricted civil liberties. Countries are ranked as very low, low, medium, high, or very high. Zero percent for no discrimination to 100 percent for very high discrimination.	Low discrimination (22%)
World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (2018) (GGGI)	Measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment across 149 countries. Scale 0 to 1.	0.712 (60/149) KZ scores low on economic participation and political empowerment

<sup>76</sup> World Bank. "Poverty and Equity." *Country Dashboard: Kazakhstan*. 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Europlus. Gender Study for Central Asia: Kazakhstan Final Report. November 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Asian Development Bank. *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*. December 2018.

<sup>79</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with USAID Health Team, July 2, 2019.

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index (2019)	The state of gender equality across 129 countries. The Index features 51 indicators across 14 of the 17 SDGs and 51 targets linked to gender issues. The Index ranks countries on a score of 0 to 100 (Excellent: 90 and above; Good: 80-89; Fair: 70-79; Poor: 60-69; Very poor: 59 and below).	71.1 (Fair) (45/129)

From 2006 to 2016, Kazakhstan implemented a *Strategy on Gender Equality*. The criticism of the strategy was that it lacked funding and government capacity to implement it, as well as clear indicators for measuring progress and that there was a disconnect between its objectives and those in State sectoral policies; line ministry strategic plans; central-level agencies, or local development plans.<sup>81</sup> Recently, this Strategy has been replaced with the *Concept on Family and Gender Policy 2030*, which is based on the principles of: “ensuring equality in the enjoyment of all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, regardless of gender; non-discrimination, prevention of gender asymmetry in state and public life; promoting gender consciousness and eliminating gender stereotypes in society.”<sup>82</sup> The criticism of this Policy is that it combines concepts of gender and family. While they are addressed separately in the document, it is a concern that gender equality and women’s empowerment are presented alongside the preservation of family—two concepts that are not always in harmony, and, if forced together, can have harmful consequences, especially for women. A similar approach of connecting gender equality and family in an official policy is being implemented in Uzbekistan, where the Government is propagating family as the cornerstone of a healthy and successful society, prides itself on preventing divorce, and puts individual wellbeing and wishes secondary to preservation of marriage.

The national gender machinery, tasked with the implementation of Kazakhstan’s gender equality policies, is spearheaded by the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family, and Demographic Policy. This organ is also an advisory body to the President. However, the Commission’s effectiveness is questionable, especially given its lack of executive power. Based on stakeholder feedback, it seems that it has mostly served as a service provider, rather than a strong representative of women’s interests and change maker at the policy level. All 26 members of the Women’s Commission are volunteers, and only three are paid civil servants. They lack financing, and the political will to elevate its status seems to be absent. The Commission is present in all 16 regions of the country, but again, their representatives are volunteers who are Akimat employees. Perhaps due to the lack of capacity and influence exhibited by the Women’s Commission, the existing legal framework, while supporting and guaranteeing gender equality, does not translate into practice, resulting in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and hampering of opportunities in the economic, education, and other sectors for women and other marginalized groups. Some key strategic documents for development of Kazakhstan, such as “Kazakhstan 2030,” “Kazakhstan 2050,” and “100 Steps,” are gender blind. The country is lacking in anti-sexual harassment legislation, as well as effective legislation to address human trafficking.

This environment of questionable political will to fully embrace concrete steps to implement the existing gender-sensitive laws and policies is perhaps a result of a common perception that gender equality has been fully achieved in Kazakhstan. This is based on the Soviet legacy of women’s empowerment and the fact that the country is scoring much better in international gender equality indicators than other countries in the region. However, patriarchal norms, which have been strengthened through the process of national identity building in the post-Soviet period, along with a plethora of gender stereotypes, remain strong. This is the case especially in rural areas and in the south of the country, where harmful traditional practices including early marriage, polygamy, and bride kidnapping can be found. In urban areas, attitudes about gender equality are more egalitarian. However, established gender roles still dictate that women should be the primary caretakers of children, the elderly, and their households, even if she has full-time paid work, and that men are the breadwinners and decisionmakers.

<sup>81</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>82</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.



## 4.2 People With Disabilities

According to the official government figures, there are 3.5 percent persons with disabilities in Kazakhstan, compared to the European Union (EU) average of 14 percent and the world average of 15 percent. This relatively low figure may be attributed to a narrow range of disability eligibility criteria used by the GoK.<sup>83</sup> As is the case in other Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan employs medical approach to disability, which views people with disabilities as medical cases, and is in opposition to the United Nations (UN) Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which Kazakhstan ratified in 2015, and which views disability from the lens of human rights and empowerment. In fact, disability policy legislation often uses the discriminatory word “invalid.” Disability legislation has improved over the past years. The law prohibits discrimination based on disability (physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental) in employment, education, and access to health care, and in the provision of other government services. Since passing of the 2008 Law on Specialized Social Services, the number of available in-home care for persons with disabilities has more than doubled; the profession of social workers was introduced, and a system for financing these services was set up.<sup>84</sup>

The GoK has been making efforts to be more inclusive of people with disabilities, such as the “Online sign language interpreting service” project, which allowed for people with speech and/or hearing impairments to access sign language services in real time online. In 2016, four online sign language interpreters assisted more than 300 people. In 2017, the project was expanded to Russia, and may be expanded to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. In Kazakhstan, the program is in use in all Public Service Centers, outpatient clinics, employment centers, and some universities, hotels, and private businesses.<sup>85</sup> Additional noteworthy efforts are schools of independent living for people with disabilities, which contribute to them feeling more self-confident, and ready to venture out on their own.

Due to social stigma attached to disability, families of children and adults with disabilities are often ashamed of them, keep them in the house away from education and other opportunities, and control their state disability pensions. Depending on the disability categorization (“mild,” “moderate,” or “severe” disabilities), the pension can range from approximately \$75 per month (equivalent to minimum wage) to \$150 per month.<sup>86</sup> Those who venture outside struggle with infrastructure that hinders their movements, costly transportation, general staring, and, most importantly, access to education and employment. Documented examples of discrimination include persons with disabilities not being sold airline tickets, as the airlines deemed that they could not travel without an assistant, as well as mistreatment of prisoners with disabilities in detention facilities.<sup>87</sup> Women with disabilities face additional discrimination, frequently from the health care professionals, such as discouraging them from continuing their pregnancies and even being forcefully sterilized. Violence against women with disabilities is very high, yet underreported. Recent Human Rights Watch research found that the majority of children with disabilities were not getting a high quality, inclusive education; rather they were isolated from mainstream education opportunities, taught in separate classrooms or special schools, often far from their homes; or taught at home, with a teacher visiting for a few hours per week at best.<sup>88</sup>

## 4.3 LGBTI

The LGBTI population in Kazakhstan experiences stigma and stereotypes, exhibited through the lens of patriarchal and hetero-normative ways the society is structured. The lack of information available in Kazakh language on sexual health issues, myths that LGBTI people are “others,” and not Kazakh, contribute to an environment that views same-sex relationships as something shameful or sinful. In a society that highly values heterosexual relationships, and concept of marriage in particular, it is not uncommon for a gay man to marry a heterosexual woman, while continuing to have relationships and sex

---

<sup>83</sup> OECD. “Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan. A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities,” 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Amnesty International. “‘We Are Like Dead Souls.’ Life without Legal Capacity in Kazakhstan.” 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Amnesty International, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>87</sup> United States Department of State. *Kazakhstan 2018 Human Rights Report*. 2018.

<sup>88</sup> Human Rights Watch. “On the Margins’: Education for Children with Disabilities in Kazakhstan.” 2019.

with men. The secrecy under which this type of behavior often takes place can lead to unintended consequences, including STIs and HIV. Discrimination is more visible in the rural areas, and among more traditional communities, including the Turkish and the Chechen, as well as among the Kazakh speaking community.

LGBTI individuals lack legal protection, as sexual orientation and gender identity are not listed as protected grounds in the Article 14 of the Kazakh Constitution, which places prohibition against discrimination based on the “*reasons of origin, social, property status, occupation, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude towards religion, convictions, place of residence, or any other circumstances.*”

One of the biggest challenges for transgender individuals is changing their name and gender marker on identity documents. The law requires them to undergo a lengthy psychiatric evaluation, as well as sterilization, hormonal therapy, and genital surgeries, before they are able to receive identity documents that align with their gender identity. Genital surgeries are only available at one clinic in Almaty, making it costly and inaccessible for most people. Many transgender individuals, not being able to afford the mandatory surgeries, or choosing not to go through this process, have lived with nonconforming documents for years and face problems with securing employment, housing, and health care.<sup>89</sup>

However, some GSIA respondents believe that the situation for LGBTI persons is improving, and that there are more allies and supporters due to the increased visibility of the community, promoted by active LGBTI groups and platforms. Furthermore, over the past several years, the attempts to pass anti-LGBTI legislation have failed. Same-sex sexual activity is not criminalized in Kazakhstan, as it is in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

#### 4.4 Youth

Youth (ages 14-29) make up about a quarter of Kazakhstan’s population. Young men make up about 50.5 percent, and young women 49.5 percent, with regional gender differences—the cities of Nur Sultan and Almaty are characterized by the predominance of young women, while young men prevail in other regions.<sup>90</sup>

The 2015 Law On State Youth Policy aims to “*create conditions for the full spiritual, cultural, educational, professional and physical development of young people, to participate in the decision-making process, successful socialization and channeling its potential for further development of the country.*”<sup>91</sup> In late 2018, the country developed a road map for the implementation of the 2020 State Youth Policy Concept (2019 is the Year of Youth in Kazakhstan). The road map includes 11 areas of activity: education, employment, health protection, affordable housing, youth entrepreneurship development, upgrading financial capability, legal culture, increasing intolerance to corruption, strengthening patriotism, support of talented youth, development of infrastructure, and coverage of state youth policy implementation in mass media.<sup>92</sup>

In higher education, enrollment rates are higher for young women (53.9 percent) than for men (46.1 percent). However, women are over-represented in the fields of study that are generally lower paid and perpetuate the gender pay gap, such as Education (72.3 percent); Humanities (70 percent); Social Sciences, Economics and Business, and Natural Sciences (64 percent each); and Health and Social Welfare (Medicine) (80 percent). Men are the majority in Technical Science and Technology (69 percent), Law (65.5 percent), and Military Training and Security (90.1 percent).<sup>93</sup>

A concern plaguing teens and young people is a high suicide rate. Globally, Kazakhstan is ranked as the 9<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for suicide rates in children aged 5-14 and youth between ages 15 and 29 respectively (2014 WHO

---

<sup>89</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>90</sup> “Youth Policy of Kazakhstan: State Programs, Values and Socialization.” 2018. Strategy2050.KZ. [https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth\\_policy\\_of\\_kazakhstan\\_state\\_programs\\_values\\_and\\_socialization\\_51269](https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth_policy_of_kazakhstan_state_programs_values_and_socialization_51269). accessed July 28, 2019.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>92</sup> “Kazakhstan Boosts Youth Policy Implementation with New Road Map.” 2018. Kazinform. [https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map\\_a3463779](https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map_a3463779).

<sup>93</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.



data).<sup>94</sup> In rural areas, young girls often commit suicide for reasons including early marriage, pregnancies, and bride-kidnapping.<sup>95</sup> Other reasons include bullying and sexual violence in schools, where there are no proper channels for addressing these issues.<sup>96</sup>

#### 4.5 Gender-Based Violence

Since 2009, the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence has been in effect. In 2016, the Standard of Provision of Special Social Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, was adopted by Decree of the Minister of Health and Social Development in order to regulate governmental and non-governmental service providers including crisis centers, shelters, and other organizations that offer services to domestic violence victims. The 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy identified the prevention of GBV in society as one of its goals. Likewise, the Concept on Family and Gender Policy 2030 is committed to the elimination of GBV, via activities that include: 1) coordination and development of inter-agency collaboration in prevention of GBV against women and girls and protection, including in conflict situations; 2) zero tolerance to any forms of violence against women, children, especially GBV (physical violence against boys; emotional violence against girls); 3) continued efforts to cut short and counteract crimes against women and minors; and 4) continued support to victims of gender-based discrimination and violence; improvement of the system for collection and analysis of violence against women statistics. In Kazakhstan, GBV is decriminalized; however there have been recent efforts to criminalize it.

In 2015, the GoK supported the *Sample Survey on Violence against Women in Kazakhstan*, the first ever nationally representative research on violence against women in Kazakhstan, based on the adapted version of the World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women. In the study, 17 percent of ever-partnered women aged 18-75 reported having experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The highest rates of violence were found in North Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan, and South Kazakhstan, and the lowest in Kyzylorda and Zhambyl. In addition, at the national level, 21 percent of ever-partnered women aged 18-75, reported that they had experienced emotional partner abuse, and 7 percent reported experiencing economic abuse.<sup>97</sup> Additional data reveal more:

- One out of three women suffer from a form of physical, sexual, or other form of violence.<sup>98</sup>
- 2018 NGO estimates suggest that on average 12 women/day were subjected to domestic violence (DV) and that more than 400 women died as a result of spousal violence.<sup>99</sup>
- In 2016, every third murder took place in the family as a result of DV. Thirty-six (36) women died and 742 women committed suicide as a result of DV. That same year, there were 2,481 registered cases of violence against women and girls.<sup>100</sup>
- Over half of all working women (53 percent) report receiving sexual advances from male supervisors and 14 percent from colleagues. However, due to shame or fear of job loss, these advances were not reported to the authorities.<sup>101</sup>
- In the first three months of 2017, approximately 129 cases of bride kidnapping were registered.<sup>102</sup>
- In a 2018 NGO survey within the LGBTI community, 48 percent of respondents experienced violence or hate because of their sexual orientation, and 56 percent knew someone who suffered

---

<sup>94</sup> "Evaluation and Costing of Pilot Project on the Prevention of Adolescent Suicide" ITAD, <https://itad.com/projects/evaluation-costing-pilot-project-prevention-adolescent-suicide-kyzylorda-oblast-kazakhstan/>, Last accessed July, 28, 2019.

<sup>95</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Just Support Foundation, July 3, 2019

<sup>97</sup> The Equality Institute, *Sample Survey on Violence Against Women in Kazakhstan*, 2017.

<sup>98</sup> OECD. *OECD Gender Policy Delivery Review: Kazakhstan: Highlights*, 2017.

<sup>99</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>100</sup> UN Women, "Kazakhstan's new plan to end domestic violence demonstrates multi-disciplinary action," <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/8/feature-kazakhstan-plan-to-end-domestic-violence-demonstrates-multi-disciplinary-action>, Last accessed July 27, 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Internews, "Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign Led by Local Media in Kazakhstan Leads to Demands for Policy Change," <https://internews.org/updates/anti-sexual-harassment-campaign-led-local-media-kazakhstan-leads-demands-policy-change>, Last accessed July 20, 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

from violence, including verbal insults, harassment, interference in private life, and physical assaults.<sup>103</sup>

In 2016, the General Prosecutor's Office developed a multi-sectoral plan *Kazakhstan Free from Domestic Violence*, which includes aligning national legislation with international standards and best practices in prevention and response to domestic violence, as well as strengthening inter-departmental cooperation and developing a comprehensive system of support for survivors of violence, including legal advice, psychological help, shelter and information services.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, in collaboration with NGOs, the GoK is supporting studies to identify the underlying causes of violence against women and children and has made investments in public monitoring of current legislation, hotlines, and awareness-raising activities with the aim of preventing domestic violence.<sup>105</sup>

However, issues remain. Challenges include underreporting of GBV to the authorities, partially due to stigma, and partially to the fact that the law enforcement authorities are usually responsive only in life-threatening situations, and often promote reconciliation, despite abuse.<sup>106</sup> Those who decide to pursue this course of action often end up in crisis centers, which, according to the Law on Special Social Services, provide social, medical, legal, socio-psychological, socio-pedagogical, socio-labor, socio-economic, and socio-cultural services. In 2017, there were 28 crisis centers (seven government-backed and 21 NGO supported),<sup>107</sup> 17 of which had shelters.<sup>108</sup> The government shelters only admit survivors after they report their case to the police. The NGO-run shelters do not have such a requirement, and offer free services, anonymity, and confidentiality, but are severely underfunded and unable to meet the demand. Stay at the shelters is temporary, up to six months.

Efforts to address GBV have been supported by USAID/CA, and other donors such as UN Women. For example, USAID Access to Information project supported setting up of Korgau123 (Defense 123), a campaign to support victims of workplace harassment, and launched a hotline to report cases of sexual harassment across the country.<sup>109</sup> UN Women has been at the forefront of GBV efforts for years, working directly with the GoK to improve legislation and response to GBV.

## 5. FINDINGS BY SECTOR

This section presents gender and social inclusion findings in the sectors and subsectors in which USAID/CA is active in Kazakhstan. They include: 1) Economic Growth (Trade and Markets, Energy, Water); 2) Democracy and Governance (Civil Society, Justice and Governance, Media, CVE, Countering Trafficking in Persons [CTIP]); and 3) Health (TB, HIV/AIDS [PEPFAR]).

---

<sup>103</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>104</sup> UN Women, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>105</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>106</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>107</sup> UN Women, "Kazakhstan's domestic violence crisis centres save lives, need funds," <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/11/kazakhstan-domestic-violence-crisis-centres-save-lives-need-funds>, Last accessed July 20, 2019.

<sup>108</sup> The Equality Institute, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>109</sup> [Internews](#) *op cit*.

## 5.1 Economic Growth

### 5.1.1 Trade and Markets

Women's labor participation rate in 2018 was 65.4 percent, compared to men's at 77.2 percent.<sup>110</sup> The rate has remained constant since 2009, at the time of the last USAID/CA gender analysis, when it was 66.7 percent for women and 76.1 percent for men. As in many other countries worldwide, there is gender occupational segregation in Kazakhstan. Women are primarily in the service sector—71.4 percent of women and 52 percent of men.<sup>111</sup> The percentage of women employed in agriculture declined by 34 percent from 2006 to 2016; however they are remaining in lower-paying service sector positions rather than accessing higher-paying industrial jobs. Women are also underrepresented in construction (20.2 percent), and under one-fifth in mining and quarrying, and in transportation and storage.<sup>112</sup> Lack of women in some of these sectors may be due to government's legal restrictions on women working in 25 occupational categories, including metalworking, mining, metallurgical works, and cement production. However, informants shared that the ban was recently revisited and about a third of the banned jobs were taken off the list. Although the Labor Code provides for the right to equal remuneration for men and women, this is not the case. In 2015, women paid workers earned only 65.9 percent of what men earned.<sup>113</sup> Different wage differentials are present in different industries. For example, in administrative and support services, women earn more than men at 111 percent, and in education and health, although dominated by women, they still earn 90 percent of what men's salaries. In more male-dominated fields, including information and communications, women earn only 67.2 percent of men's earnings, and in finance and insurance only 65.2 percent. Women in professional, scientific, and technical activities earn only 59 percent of men's salaries.<sup>114</sup> Sex disaggregation and unequal pay in the labor force are a result of sex disaggregation in higher education. GoK data from 2015 show that women represented the majority (55.9 percent) of university students, while men were the majority (52.3 percent) in technical and vocational education. In technical and vocational education institutions, women were the majority in the fields of Services, Economics, and Management; Arts and Culture; Medicine and Pharmaceuticals; and Education. Men dominated Metallurgy and Mechanical Engineering; Oil, Gas and Chemical Industries; Information Technology; and Construction. In regard to university specializations, men were concentrated in Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction; and information and communications technology (ICT). Women dominated Social Sciences, Journalism, and Information; Arts and Humanities; and Education.<sup>115</sup>

Women in Kazakhstan are active in SMEs. Forty-two (42) percent of economically active SMEs are women owned, but they are mostly micro and small businesses.<sup>116</sup> An average female entrepreneur is approximately 40 years old, and most likely owns a service-oriented business, such as catering, hair dressing, tourism, cheese making, food production, and trade.<sup>117</sup> Obstacles to women's participation in business are both societal and structural. At the societal level, social expectations of women often guide their decisions. For example, some women are not interested to grow their businesses out of fear that the society will think they are acting like men; and out of fear of risk and failure. There is also skepticism about women's business abilities from many men, and mothers-in-law. In addition, since women are expected to be in charge of childcare responsibilities, the struggle to achieve work-life balance in an environment where there is a lack of affordable childcare, can get in the way of their desires to start a business. In fact, only 8.5 percent of children 0-2 are enrolled in childcare; there are long waiting lists for government-subsidized childcare; private childcare is two to three times as expensive; and there are no financial incentives for fathers to take paternal leave.<sup>118</sup> Being in charge of childcare often limits women to home-based production activities which do not interfere with their household activities. Women also experience a double burden, where, despite participation in paid employment outside their homes, they

---

<sup>110</sup> ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.

<sup>111</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>115</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with EBRD, July 3, 2019.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with CTJ, July 3, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> OECD, 2017 *op cit*.

still perform the majority of tasks related to child rearing and household maintenance. In fact, time-use studies of women and men reveal that women spend three hours more per day than men on household activities.<sup>119</sup> However, some recent GoK data reveal that this trend may be changing. In 2018, women spent 12.8 percent of their time on unpaid domestic work, compared to men's 11.9 percent. In 2010, women reported spending 17.1 percent, and men 7.7 percent of their time on unpaid home work.<sup>120</sup> This change means that men are taking on more domestic work, therefore making space for women to pursue other activities. Family support, especially the husband's, is crucial in making women's business a success.

Structural obstacles to women's SMEs include: less access to information, technical support, and networks than men; and being less likely to take out loans, as women prefer to rely on savings for financing, or lack collateral (property is often registered in husband's name). The interest rate for bank loans between 15 and 20 percent annually is considered unfavorable by most small businesses.<sup>121</sup>

Strategies and programs to address obstacles to women's participation in the economy have been implemented by the GoK, the donor community, the private sector, and women's community groups. To reach its goal of more rapid development and join the 30 most developed countries by 2050, Kazakhstan is diversifying its economic base away from extractive industries and towards the SME sector. Last year, the government allocated \$56 million to support female entrepreneurship.<sup>122</sup> The Government's Damu Entrepreneurship Fund works with second-tier banks which provide micro-loans to female entrepreneurs. The Fund also works with donors such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to facilitate loans for their programs that support female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, pension reform is currently underway, which will, by 2020, equalize women's and men's retirement age (currently at 58 years for women, and 63 years for men), and increase benefits to self-employed workers and (primarily) female workers who take time out of the workforce for childcare responsibilities.

Similarly, donors, including USAID, have been investing in multiple aspects related to women's economic development. USAID/CA's Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Activity in Central Asia (CTJ) facilitates trade and employment in horticulture, tourism, transport, and logistics across the five Central Asian economies. By incentivizing firms to become more regionally competitive and by addressing cross-border impediments to trade, USAID helps to develop a more diverse and competitive private sector and generate export-driven growth. CTJ tackles obstacles to gender equality in the economic growth (EG) sector in several ways. It provides microfinance loans to rural women and skills training (time management, marketing, business skills) to entrepreneurs in South Kazakhstan. It also provides support and training to female-owned businesses in the tourism sector, which is dominated by women. The activity plans to conduct a survey on issues and challenges women face in transport and logistics, where, in 2016, they represented only 19 percent of employees in the sector.<sup>123</sup> CTJ also promotes and supports women's participation in trade events, including the annual Central Asia Trade Forum.<sup>124</sup> Likewise, EBRD's Women in Business program provides business coaching, mentorship, networking opportunities, and assistance to female entrepreneurs, along with access to finance, through a partnership with the GoK's Damu Entrepreneurship Fund. Program participants are generally married and have been in business for at least two years.<sup>125</sup> UN Women supports economic empowerment targets socially vulnerable women—women with disabilities, women living with HIV, single mothers, mothers with many children and migrant women.<sup>126</sup>

Failing to have their needs met by government or donor programs, women themselves have been active in developing an environment supportive of their dual roles as mothers and labor force participants. For example, Business Mama is a community that targets young mothers who are currently on parental leave

---

<sup>119</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>120</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>121</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>122</sup> Gulshara Abdykalikova, State Secretary of the Republic of Kazakhstan Charts the Country's Challenging Journey on the Road to Gender Equality, 2018. <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/kazakhstan-challenging-road-to-gender-equality/55185/>. Last accessed July 28, 2019.

<sup>123</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with CTJ, July 3, 2019.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with EBRD, July 3, 2019.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with UN Women, July 22, 2019.

and are looking to change their careers or start their own businesses. The program helps them find online resources and opportunities, as well as provides webinars, fairs, fora, and co-working spaces with childcare available. Such communities aim to address the issue of women dropping out of the workforce after having children due to lack of flexible working hours and opportunities for remote work.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan, an NGO, with more than 20 branches around the country, provides services and networking opportunities for more than its 5,000 members.

People with disabilities also struggle to enter the workforce. The 2016 Law No. 482-V on Employment mandates that companies are required to set aside between 2 percent and 4 percent of their jobs for persons with disabilities, excluding positions that involve heavy work or work in harmful or hazardous conditions. Local authorities (Akimats) can set regional quotas for certain employers.<sup>128</sup> However, this requirement is not enforced or monitored in any way. In fact, only about a third of quota jobs are actually filled by employees with a disability. According to the employers, they are willing to hire people with disabilities, but there are no qualified candidates to hire.<sup>129</sup> Some local disabled people organizations (DPOs), including Shyrak, and local businesses, have worked together to develop a framework for inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor force. The framework includes the following considerations:<sup>130</sup>

- Hiring people with disabilities;
- Making disability-friendly products (i.e., braille on food products);
- Engaging entrepreneurs with disabilities; and
- Having internal policies that include anti-discrimination provisions.

In 2018, 9 percent of young people aged 15-24 years were not in school or in employment, while youth unemployment was at 4.7 percent.<sup>131</sup> Since 2017, the State has been providing free technical and vocational education, food, scholarships, accommodations, and travel expenses to young people without secondary or higher education, as well as other vulnerable groups. The goal of this program is to reduce unemployment.<sup>132</sup> However, there is an argument to be made that the main challenge for Kazakh youth is not the lack of jobs, but rather the lack of good quality jobs and rewarding career prospects in the formal sector.<sup>133</sup> One of the main hurdles here are public employment services, which lack listings of high quality jobs; infrequently provide social assistance and unemployment benefits; and, as such, people do not think registering with these services will help them find employment.<sup>134</sup> In fact, the proportion of youth employed in permanent jobs compared to those who used public employment services decreased from 87.1 percent in 2010 to 59.3 percent in 2018.<sup>135</sup>

### 5.1.2 Energy

Gender can be considered both from an energy consumption and energy provision perspective. Women are the main energy consumers at the household level since they are responsible for most of household-related tasks. They are most affected by power outages, which occur frequently in rural areas, as well as carbon monoxide poisoning which relates to residential coal consumption. Poor households, often women-headed, struggle to afford electricity and are not always able to afford a consumption-based meter unless supported through subsidies.<sup>136</sup> An EBRD case study found women in rural districts are active in community meetings related to district heating. Since women are the main energy users in the household,

---

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Just Support Foundation, July 3, 2019

<sup>128</sup> Alexandr Chumachenko, "Rules for employing disabled people in Kazakhstan," IUS Laboris, August 1, 2017, <https://theword.iuslaboris.com/hrlaw/insights/rules-for-employing-disabled-people-in-kazakhstan>, Last accessed July 28, 2019.

<sup>129</sup> OECD, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Shyrak, July 4, 2019.

<sup>131</sup> UNDP, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>132</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>133</sup> OECD, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>135</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>136</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.



they often have to deal with male employees of electric companies. In some areas, they are reluctant to let them in. This issue could be solved by hiring more women as technicians.<sup>137</sup>

From the energy provision perspective, women are largely absent in decision-making positions at the national policy level, as well as in local government. Women's participation in the energy sector is very low; less than 5 percent of female workforce in major energy companies, and mostly in low non-decision-making positions.<sup>138</sup> Barriers to women's participation in the sector include gender stereotypes about appropriate fields of study for boys and girls; boys are encouraged to study energy-related fields, while girls are not. In 2015, the International Youth Foundation, Chevron, and the Akimat of Atryau launched the Zangar initiative which creates an environment supportive of youth learning and professional skill-building and expands programming for life skills and STEM education, which will prepare young women and men with market-relevant skills.<sup>139</sup>

Kazakhstan 2050 outlines that by 2050, alternative and renewable energy sources must account for at least a half of the country's total energy consumption, which means that investment in alternative energy sources will increase over the next couple of decades. Worldwide, renewable energy, as a fairly new and underexplored field with less competition, is frequently a viable point of entry for women-owned startups. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is currently supporting an initiative to promote green technology enterprises by women, and the ADB is in a position to do the same through their SME programming.<sup>140</sup>

Kazakh energy companies are also aware of the importance of increasing the role of women in the sector. Earlier this year, Samruk-Energy, Kazakhstan's national energy company, signed the UN Women's Empowerment Principles,<sup>141</sup> which are meant to guide addressing gender parity, non-discrimination in the workplace, professional development for women, and public reporting on gender equality progress.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, KAZENERGY Association, which supports the development of entrepreneurship in the gas and oil industries, has an active Women's Energy Club which is involved in annual KAZENERGY Eurasian Fora, and works to increase women's participation in the sector. In 2018, with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UNDP, KAZENERGY held a regional conference on empowering women through promoting clean and affordable energy. This event provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the issue and build capacity of regional Government officials. Topics discussed included differential (gender, rural/urban) access and use of energy; women's participation in decision-making, management, and employment in the sector; and improving regional collaboration to empower women in the sector.<sup>143</sup> KAZENERGY is also active in supporting youth involvement in the sector. For example, along with Shell Kazakhstan, it supports "Students Energy Challenge," where students of Kazakh technical universities compete for a prize of up to \$18,000.<sup>144</sup>

Donors are also working to address gender issues in the sector. USAID/CA's Power the Future (PtF) regional activity supports each country of Central Asia to create effective enabling environments for private sector investments in renewable energy that includes development of policy and regulatory preconditions for investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency. PtF has a gender component which includes building capacity of young women, university students, interested in the energy sector and

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Power the Future (PtF), July 2, 2019.

<sup>139</sup> "Zangar," International Youth Foundation, 2017, <https://www.iyfnet.org/initiatives/zangar>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>140</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>141</sup> The seven principles are: Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality; Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination; Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers; Principle 4: Promote education, training, and professional development for women; Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women; Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy; and Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

<sup>142</sup> Dylan Bell. "Samruk-Energy signs UN Women's Empowerment Principles," ERBD, March 7, 2019, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/samrukenergy-signs-un-womens-empowerment-principles.html>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>143</sup> "Women in Energy: UNECE Supports Strengthened Capacities and Knowledge Among Officials and Stakeholders from Central Asia," UNECE, (n.d), <https://www.unece.org/info/media/news/sustainable-energy/2018/women-in-energy-unece-supports-strengthened-capacities-and-knowledge-among-officials-and-stakeholders-from-central-asia/doc.html>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>144</sup> Student Energy Challenge, Kazenergy, 2019, <http://kazenergyforum.com/en/student-energy-challenge>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

connecting them with mentors in the sector. In 2018, the activity supported a two-day workshop “Gender integration into energy sector in Central Asia,” with government and private sector participants from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The workshop, which included a field trip to the Burnoye Solar renewable energy solar power plant, focused on how to promote gender considerations into the energy sector and was designed to build the leadership skills and provide networking opportunities for women and women’s organizations involved in clean energy.<sup>145</sup>

EBRD is currently undertaking a survey on “Women in the Energy Sector” together with KAZENERGY. The survey will provide a baseline for the sector and look at barriers for women in entering and advancing within the sector. The survey will be distributed among all KAZENERGY member companies (and some additional), and the hope is to have some preliminary results for the Eurasian energy forum this fall.<sup>146</sup> The Bank is also assisting Samruk-Energy to implement their gender action plan; and, along with Almaty Power Plants, a Samruk-Energy subsidiary, is reaching out to women and girls enrolled in technical and vocational training colleges and universities in Almaty to encourage their interest in studying energy-related fields.<sup>147</sup>

### 5.1.3 Water

Despite the fact that there is an overall high level of access to water in Kazakhstan (99.3 percent of households, 73.1 percent piped, and 26.2 percent non-piped),<sup>148</sup> access to water can be restricted, especially in rural areas, where water supply systems deteriorate due to pollution. For rural women, this means time spent on transport and treatment of water cuts into their time to perform other duties, or to work on a business, therefore potentially keeping them away from income generating opportunities. For example, reports from women in small remote villages with high female unemployment and limited supplies of gas and water show that 90-100 percent of their time is spent primarily on water collection.<sup>149</sup> Access can also be limited for the urban poor and migrants, due to its cost.

In terms of women’s participation in the sector, few women are involved in the water management sector, and in local administration. USAID/CA’s Smart Waters Project (2015-2020) is implemented in all Central Asian countries and Afghanistan with the goal of ensuring integrated water resource management (IWRM) via 1) capacity-building and academia exchange; 2) networking and communication among water management specialists; and 3) the basin management and planning (eight trans-boundary basins and 13 river basins). The project provides scholarships for post-graduate students from six countries, nominated by their governments, in Master of Arts in IWRM at the German-Kazak University in Almaty; 20-25 percent of scholarships students are female. Forty-eight (48) young people have been enrolled in the Program, and 12 have graduated, including four young women.<sup>150</sup>

OSCE has been supporting women’s empowerment in the water sector in Central Asia for several years. In 2015, along with the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC), it organized a three-day regional training workshop in Almaty on gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution in water governance.<sup>151</sup> That same year, it organized a training course in Denmark for female water professionals from state agencies, regional organizations, NGOs, and the private sector from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The training also involved a one-year mentoring program.<sup>152</sup>

Global Water Partnership Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA) works to help the region to solve inter-state water resources issues and supports development of country level IWRM. GWP has a gender strategy that addresses diversity and inclusion, social equity, and women’s roles in the integrated and sustainable management of water resources. GWP also has a Youth Engagement strategy, as well as Youth

---

<sup>145</sup> USAID/CA, Workshop on “Gender integration to the energy sector of Central Asian countries,” August 10, 2018, <http://ptfcar.org/en/blog/2018/10/workshop-on-gender-integration-to-energy-sector-of-central-asian-countries/>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>146</sup> E-mail correspondence with EBRD Senior Gender Expert, July 4, 2019. E-mail on file with author.

<sup>147</sup> Dylan Bell, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>148</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>149</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with Smart Waters Project, July 2, 2019.

<sup>151</sup> OSCE, “Women, water and security,” August 12, 2015, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/176671>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>152</sup> Mersiha Causevic Podzic, “Empowering women water professionals - #WorldWaterDay,” March 18, 2016, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/228816>, last accessed July 29, 2019.

for Water and Climate online campaign. This year, to mark International Women’s Day, GWP CACENA joined the global campaign #BalanceforBetter for gender balance in water management.<sup>153</sup>

## 5.2 Democracy and Governance

### 5.2.1 Civil Society

There are 18,092 NGOs registered in Kazakhstan, the majority of which are in Almaty and Nur Sultan.<sup>154</sup> Forty-two (42) percent of the NGOs offer services in the social sphere (education, public health, and culture); 24 percent in social protection of vulnerable groups; and 34 percent work on human rights, the environment, and gender issues.<sup>155</sup> Approximately 200,000 people are employed in the sector,<sup>156</sup> which is dominated by women. One of the concerns in the sector identified by the informants is that its workforce is aging and shrinking, as the youth are not attracted to it due to the low wages. An aging sector will not be able to connect easily with the youth and recruit them into the sector to ensure its sustainability. Some informants have expressed a concern that formal civil society organizations (CSOs) are not very effective, as they are not responsive to the needs of the population. Another issue is the presence of so-called “suitcase” NGOs, which exclusively focus on advocacy and do not have beneficiaries. Additional challenges to civil society in Kazakhstan identified in recent research include insufficient financial resources, state intervention in the activities of NGOs, rigid legal regulation, and reduced public confidence in the civil sector.<sup>157</sup>

Being cognizant of the existing civil society-related challenges outlined above, USAID/CA’s soon to start Regional Civil Society project will work in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to connect the informal and formal civil society and foster development of civically responsible, socially active young leaders. This will be accomplished via activities including study tours, debates, volunteering opportunities, mentorship opportunities, exposure to entrepreneurship, leadership, critical thinking, scholarships, and TED talks.<sup>158</sup>

One of the key players in the sector is Civil Society Development Organization (ARGO), an umbrella organization with regional influence through its numerous member organizations across Central Asia. ARGO provides capacity-building to its members, administers small grants, dialogues with government (as a consultative body with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on human dimensions issues), and supports in-country and regional networks.<sup>159</sup> Some CSO respondents have expressed a desire to be able to apply for USAID grants directly from donors, rather than through ARGO.

Many CSOs, especially DPOs and LGBTI groups, require capacity-building. LGBTI groups, both registered and unregistered, are actively working across the country. Examples include Feminita, AlmaTQ, and Fempoint in Almaty, GALA in Karaganda and Kaleidoscope and Human Health Institute in Nur Sultan. While some of these organizations work on HIV issues, they are also active participants in the civil society space.

### 5.2.2 Justice and Governance

Kazakh law provides equal access to justice to all of its citizens; however, in reality, that access can be hampered for vulnerable groups. Research on women’s access to justice found several impediments, which include:<sup>160</sup>

- **Social norms:** Gender roles and expectations regarding one’s behavior can guide women’s approach to justice. This is especially the case with issues regarding domestic violence, where women are ashamed, blame themselves, and, in most cases, turn to informal justice mechanisms

---

<sup>153</sup> “GWP CACENA Joins International Women’s Day Campaign” GWP, Last modified March 9, 2019, <https://www.gwp.org/en/CACENA/News/gwp-cacena-joins-international-womens-day-campaign/>, Last accessed July 29, 2019.

<sup>154</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>155</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>157</sup> IWPR, *The Situation of the Civil society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan*, 2018.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with USAID/CA Youth PoCs, July 2, 2019.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with ARGO, July 5, 2019.

<sup>160</sup> ICJ, “Women’s Access to Justice in Kazakhstan: Identifying the Obstacles & Need for Change,” 2013.



(*akims* – village leader or local representative), which are based on mediation and reconciliation and inherently discriminate against women.

- **Resource constraints:** Since women are often economically dependent on men, they may not have access to funds required to seek justice. Access to free legal aid is limited.
- **Lack of training and knowledge of the justice system employees:** The law enforcement, and members of the judiciary and other justice system personnel are frequently unaware of relevant laws and regulations.
- **Lack of legal literacy:** Women are often unaware of their rights and have low to no legal literacy.

For people with disabilities, access to justice can be curtailed by the lack of appropriate infrastructure. One area where this is quite obvious is voting. Apart from wheelchair access, polling stations have no tactile flooring, no sound signals on the doors, and no information offered in braille; in addition, polling staff are not trained in assisting people with disabilities. As a result, many people with disabilities are not able to exercise their right to vote.<sup>161</sup> While the GoK is making an effort to provide information for people with disabilities on relevant topics including criteria for disability, rehabilitation, education, and documentation required to claim disability status via its e-government portal, this is executed in a discriminatory way. The language used throughout the webpage is discriminatory as it refers to “invalids” rather than “persons with disabilities” and “invalidity” rather than “disability,”<sup>162</sup> therefore emphasizing the GoK’s position that people with disabilities are medical cases, rather than individuals with agency.

LGBTI individuals are often hesitant to approach law enforcement since that can lead to additional abuse and extortion.

Women and marginalized groups are underrepresented in governance in decision-making positions. In the Lower House of the Parliament, women make up 27.6 percent and 22.2 percent in local representative bodies.<sup>163</sup> According to some informants, women’s participation in politics is not a realistic indicator of women’s empowerment, since they obtained these positions as a reward for their support of the male political elite. While women make up 55 percent of the civil service positions, they represent only 10 percent of politically appointed civil servants.<sup>164</sup>

### 5.2.3 Media

Social media plays an increasingly important role in dissemination of information and influencing people’s knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. In 2018, 81.5 percent of total households in Kazakhstan (66.4 percent urban and 33.6 percent rural) had access to the Internet via mobile broadband connection; and 93.7 percent of men and 92.3 percent of women owned mobile phones.<sup>165</sup> Overall, 65.9 percent of CSOs report using Facebook, 31.7 percent Twitter, and 36.6 percent Instagram to promote their activities.<sup>166</sup>

Due to its influence, media can play a positive role in breaking down of gender stereotypes and promotion of gender equality, LGBTI issues, and women’s empowerment. However, recent evaluation of the media coverage of gender equality in Kazakhstan found that gender stereotypes presented by the media “prevent the flourishing of women’s self-awareness and self-esteem.” Women are usually presented as sexual objects or “happy housewives.” Furthermore, men are presented as “independent, self-sufficient persons,” while women are portrayed as lacking independence, and always in association with a male figure—a father, a husband, a teacher.<sup>167</sup>

LGBTI issues are frequently censored (on the grounds of “protecting morality” and “upholding traditions”) by the state-controlled media, or are presented in a sensationalist and hostile way, which contributes to

---

<sup>161</sup> Parkhat Yussupjanov, “In Kazakhstan, Having a Disability Often Means Not Getting a Vote,” Open Society Foundations, November 16, 2016. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/kazakhstan-having-disability-often-means-not-getting-vote>, Last accessed on July 30, 2019.

<sup>162</sup> “Social Assistance for Disabled Persons,” egov.KZ, Last modified June 20, 2019. <https://egov.kz/cms/en/articles/invalids>.

<sup>163</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>164</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>165</sup> Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>166</sup> IWPR, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>167</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

already entrenched negative transphobic and homophobic stereotypes.<sup>168</sup> There are vast differences in Russian and Kazakh language content, with the latter being more sexist and homophobic. Progressive media outlets are primarily concentrated in big cities and urban bubbles, and are mostly in the Russian language, and therefore have a limited reach. An example of a progressive online platform through which LGBTI positive information is shared, both in Russian and Kazakh, is Kok Team ([www.kok.team](http://www.kok.team)).

USAID's Access to Information (A2I) project (ending in September 2019) works to create an enabling media environment and support the professionalism of journalists and sustainability of media outlets. A2I addresses gender and social stereotypes through several activities. It monitors women's portrayal in the media and advertising and asks for changes to content if sexist or inappropriate language is used in these depictions. It also supported #KORGAU123 campaign, which was quite successful in raising sexual harassment issues at work; crisis shelters received calls about it for their hotline and activists sent postcards to the parliament asking for implementation of relevant legislation when it comes to sexual harassment. A2I also provides production grants through grant competitions that include LGBTI and disability issues. A2I's follow-on program, Central Asia Media Program (CAMP), recognizing the importance of social media, will work with bloggers and YouTubers and will continue with media literacy education, including in local languages.

#### 5.2.4 Countering Violent Extremism

Key drivers of radicalization in Central Asia and worldwide include:<sup>169</sup> 1) social exclusion – vulnerable populations that feel isolated in a new environment, such as migrant workers and prison population, are at high risk for recruitment; 2) social injustice – radical movements may be especially attracted to youth who had no access to alternative justice, such as mediation, and ended up in prison for a minor infraction; 3) endemic economic exclusion – inequalities, economic disparities, and exploitation of workers are often used as reference points for radical propaganda; 4) poor government service provision and lack of institutional trust – unemployment, informal employment, corruption, and nepotism; 5) religious education – exposure to inadequately educated or radically indoctrinated religious scholars in schools, prisons, labor camps and informal migrant communities; and 6) protracted conflict – unresolved collective grievances of certain groups, unaddressed war crimes, persistent injustice and discrimination—all of which entrench alienation.

Women and youth can play multiple roles in CVE—both as recruiters and recruits, but also as agents of change and de-radicalization. Kazakhstan is one of the few countries that is repatriating its citizens who left to join the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. The returned men who have committed crimes are being prosecuted and jailed, and women and children, perhaps based on gendered assumptions about their limited agency, are generally provided reintegration support, including psycho-social support, specialized schooling, job training, and family assistance. However, the capacities and willingness of professionals and practitioners to provide these services are often limited.<sup>170</sup>

USAID/CA's regional Dignity and Rights (DAR) project, which works on migrants and CTIP, has a CVE component that addressed the vulnerabilities of migrants to extremist messaging and recruitment. The project plans to undertake research on multiple aspects of CVE, including identifying hotspots for recruitment, reasons for joining, women's involvement, and historical nature of information.

In 2018, UNDP Kazakhstan started implementing a multi-country CVE intervention in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, with the support by the Government of Japan. The project addresses social and economic exclusion of at-risk youth. It provides work/entrepreneurship support and on-demand skills development activities. In addition, the project fosters formal and informal social support platforms, networks, and counseling services, with an aim of equipping youth networks and individuals to

---

<sup>168</sup> Amnesty International, "Less Equal: LGBTI Human Rights Defenders in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan," 2017.

<sup>169</sup> UNDP, Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia, Regional Brief 2018.

<sup>170</sup> Stevan Weine and Eric Rosand, "Repatriating ISIS Families: An Opportunity to Show that 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism' Can Work," Just Security, June 14, 2019, <https://www.justsecurity.org/64567/repatriating-isis-families-an-opportunity-to-show-that-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-can-work/>, Last accessed July 30, 2019.

withstand the pull factors of extremism and develop and spread “positive” narratives, via modern communication technologies and face-to-face engagements.<sup>171</sup>

The OSCE has also been involved in CVE efforts via their “OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism (#UnitedCVE)” campaign. In Kazakhstan, in 2017, they supported a regional workshop for 15 young men and women involved in preventing CVE or active in combatting similar challenges, such as intolerance, xenophobia, hate speech, hate crimes, marginalization, disenfranchisement, gangs, or hooliganism, where they shared their experiences and collectively formulated recommendations for policymakers.<sup>172</sup>

### 5.2.5 Countering Trafficking in Persons

In December 2018, Kazakhstan signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. Its Concept of Migration Policy is in line with the expected economic, social and demographic development of the country, its foreign policy, the integration processes within the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and with worldwide globalization trends. The country has a 2006 Plan of Action to Combat and Prevent Offenses Involving Trafficking in Persons which is updated every three years. However, it is not in line with international standards. For example, it allows for conciliation between parties, its systems to identify and support trafficking victims are insufficient and allows for deportation of trafficking victims. However, there have been increased government efforts to prosecute traffickers, address cases of police collusion, and establish shelters for trafficking victims.<sup>173</sup>

Kazakhstan is a destination country for labor migrants from other countries of Central Asia. Many labor migrants, male and female, become victims of forced labor, labor trafficking, and sexual exploitation. They are frequently lured through fraud and deceit, either by friends or acquaintances, or by small organized criminal groups in Kazakhstan. The traffickers threaten the victims with punishment and deportation if they notify authorities, exploiting the lack of knowledge that victims have about their rights in Kazakhstan. Larger cities such as Nur Sultan, Almaty, Aktau, and Atryau are destinations for both rural migrants (internal migration) and the migrants from outside the country. Migrants from the Eurasian Customs Union (EACU) countries are entitled to simplified procedures for registration, access to healthcare, etc. Others, such as Uzbeks, are more vulnerable, as Russia’s ban of re-entry for an estimated one million Uzbek migrants resulted in them seeking temporary stay in Kazakhstan.

As of 2017, there are government-funded, NGO-operated trafficking shelters in seven cities: Almaty, Temirtau, Petropavlovsk, Uralsk, Aktobe, Kyzylorda, and Taldykorgan. These shelters offer legal, psychological, and medical assistance, in line with the 2016 established standards for trafficking victims’ shelters, but are only available to Kazakh citizens, stateless and permanent residents, and not to foreign seasonal migrants. The 2017 law on victim compensation, scheduled to be implemented in 2020, allows victims, including foreigners, to request monetary compensation as a part of the criminal proceedings, instead of filing a civil suit in conjunction with the criminal case.<sup>174</sup>

USAID/CA’s regional DAR project, which addresses the challenges related to migrant workers’ rights and CTIP in Central Asia, through its implementing partner, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), has been building capacity of government and NGOs to improve the legal framework for migrants, develop action plans to provide quality services, and establish inter-agency cooperation and coordination. A new counter-trafficking project is currently in procurement.

---

<sup>171</sup> UNDP, 2018 *op cit.*

<sup>172</sup> OSCE, “Youth and the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Workshop on Perspectives from Central Asia,” 2017, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/315296>, Last accessed July 30, 2019.

<sup>173</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit.*

<sup>174</sup> U.S. State Department, *2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Kazakhstan*, June 28, 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b09a.html>, Last accessed July 30, 2019.

## 5.3 Health

### 5.3.1 Tuberculosis

There is a significant TB epidemic in the region. In 2017, estimated 12,000 people in Kazakhstan developed TB, and estimated 3,800 developed drug-resistant TB (DR-TB).<sup>175</sup> Fortunately, TB rates are declining in many countries in the region; the highest annual rates of decline between 2007 and 2017 were in Kazakhstan (-9.4 percent) and Tajikistan (-7.4 percent).<sup>176</sup> The GoK has the Comprehensive Plan to Fight TB in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014-2020. In December 2018, Kazakhstan hosted the fourth annual conference on “Migration and Tuberculosis: Cross-Border TB Control and Care in the Central Asian Region,” where WHO and Stop TB Partnership, NGOs and regional governments acknowledged and discussed the issue of cross-border TB. As a result, Kazakhstan signed bilateral agreements with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to collaborate on cross-border TB issues.

Within the framework of guaranteed free health care, TB treatment is free for Kazakh citizens. In 2019, the GoK’s budget for TB treatment is over 47 billion tenge (122 million USD).<sup>177</sup>

At-risk populations for TB include migrants and the prison population. In general, men are more susceptible to TB because they are more likely to smoke and engage in more risky behaviors than women.<sup>178</sup> Migrants, in general, lack information about TB, live in crowded conditions, have limited access to TB diagnosis and treatment, and, as a result, are twice as likely as the general population to drop from treatment. According to the estimates, 10 percent of the total TB cases in Kazakhstan is among the migrant population.<sup>179</sup> Addressing TB among migrants goes beyond medical care, and involves factors such as legal and structural obstacles, lack of awareness of labor and immigration laws, fear of losing income generating opportunities, as well as stigma, exclusion, and discrimination.

Kazakhstan is one of 10 priority countries under the U.S. Government’s National Action Plan to Combat Multi Drug-Resistant (MDR) TB. USAID supports activities that improve the delivery of prevention, care and treatment services; enhance the capacities of institutions to address MDR TB; develop systems to strengthen the diagnosis of MDR TB; and improve infection control practices. USAID works with civilian and prison health officials to expand use of patient-centered outpatient treatment approaches. USAID also helps health providers, communities, and patients to understand and address the treatment and care of TB and MDR TB.<sup>180</sup> Two more TB-related projects are in the pipeline, Stop TB Partnership (\$1.65 million) which will be active in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and Challenge TB (\$600,000), which will be implemented in Kazakhstan and provide support to Turkmenistan.

### 5.3.2 HIV/AIDS

Kazakhstan has a strong legal framework for the protection of health and access to health care services including the Constitution; the Code of Population Health and Health Care; the Law On Mandatory Social Health Insurance (2015); the State Program of the Development of Health Care – “Densaulyk” (2016); Decrees of the Ministry of Health on pregnancy termination; in the introduction of youth-friendly services; and the Roadmap of Strengthening Reproductive Health of Citizens of Kazakhstan. Despite this legal framework, there is an overwhelming absence of prevention activities, which are normally provided through education and dissemination of knowledge on reproductive health, family planning, and prevention of STIs and HIV. Due to only limited information on HIV and other infectious diseases provided through a course called “Basics of Life Safety” in secondary schools, only 26.7 percent of young Kazakh women

---

<sup>175</sup> Stop TB, “Kazakhstan: Tuberculosis Situation in 2017,” Last modified June 19, 2017, [http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ\\_Dashboard.html](http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ_Dashboard.html), Last accessed July 30, 2019

<sup>176</sup> Avert, “HIV and AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview,” January 18, 2019, <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>, Last accessed July 27, 2019.

<sup>177</sup> Ekaterina Eliseera, “Budget for TB treatment increased in Kazakhstan in 2019,” Kazpravda, March 15, 2019, <https://www.kazpravda.kz/en/news/society/budget-for-tb-treatment-increased-in-kazakhstan-in-2019>, Last accessed July 31, 2019.

<sup>178</sup> KII with USAID Health team, July 2, 2019.

<sup>179</sup> Project Hope. *Kazakhstan*, Last modified November 10, 2010, <https://www.projecthope.org/kazakhstan/>, Last accessed August 3, 2019.

<sup>180</sup> USAID, “Kazakhstan: Global Health,” May 7, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/kazakhstan/global-health>, Last accessed August 3, 2019.

ages 15-24 have any knowledge on HIV prevention.<sup>181</sup> Consequences of low reproductive health knowledge include a high abortion rate, (20.8 per 1,000 women in the 15-49 age group), increased sexual transmission of HIV and STIs, and low prevalence of contraceptives usage (38 percent of women of reproductive age, per 2012 data).<sup>182</sup> Access to contraceptives and their affordability are an obstacles for many groups, including low-income individuals, the unemployed, youth, families with several children, single-parent families, migrants, sex workers, people living with HIV, and women from conservative families whose husbands and in-laws restrict the use of family planning methods.<sup>183</sup>

Kazakhstan provides free health treatments for people living with HIV and has reduced the cost of antiretroviral (ART) medicines in recent years. The cost of first-line ART therapy in Kazakhstan (tenofovir/emtricitabine/efavirenz) decreased from \$3,140 to \$100 per patient, enabling its coverage to nearly double from 7,000 patients by the end of 2016 to 12,000 by the end of 2017.<sup>184</sup> The country has significantly increased its domestic HIV funding from 7 percent to 100 percent between 2007 and 2011.<sup>185</sup> At this time, the HIV epidemic is at a concentrated stage, with HIV prevalence among the individuals aged 15-49 at 0.2 percent, and an estimated number of people of all ages living with HIV 26,000.<sup>186</sup> Among people living with HIV, 60 percent are male and 40 percent are female.<sup>187</sup>

The main way of HIV transmission is through intravenous drug use, and through sexual contacts with their partners. Afraid of being caught by the police carrying a needle, drug users most often share needles. HIV prevalence among women who inject drugs is higher than men who inject drugs in Kazakhstan. Injecting drug use is closely related to sex work in the region. In Central Asia, HIV prevalence is about 20 times higher among female sex workers who inject drugs than those who do not. Women who inject drugs generally are younger, prone to more risky sexual behaviors, and more likely to share injecting equipment than men who inject drugs.<sup>188</sup> Another group at higher risk of HIV infections is men who have sex with men (MSM), due to risky behaviors including high levels of alcohol and drug use and casual unprotected sex. Due to unreliability of HIV prevalence data for MSM, the reports for Kazakhstan for this group range from as low as 0.2 percent and as high as 20 percent.<sup>189</sup>

People living with HIV often experience stigma and discrimination, and therefore frequently hide their positive status from their communities. Legal discrimination against this group entails not allowing them to adopt a child, serve in the military, or obtain Kazakh citizenship or a residence permit. HIV+ people with disabilities are not entitled to have an individual assistant, an allowance provided by the state for people with disabilities. Eighteen (18) percent of people living with HIV in Kazakhstan report being denied health services.<sup>190</sup> Nearly 10 percent of pregnant women with HIV who seek medical treatment are strongly encouraged by the health professionals to have an abortion.<sup>191</sup>

Key donors for HIV/AIDS prevention and response activities include the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the WHO. The United States Government (USG) supports these activities via U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through agencies including USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). For example, the CDC is currently supporting the SUPPORT4HEALTH model in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. This model *“aims to improve retention in care and adherence to ART for people living with HIV by bringing skilled nursing care to individuals at home, rather than requiring patients to risk identification and stigma by visiting the health facility. The personal contact with a community health care worker also enables a trusting relationship and specific support for patients with additional health needs, such*

---

<sup>181</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>182</sup> Europlus, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> WHO, *Compendium of Good Practices in the Health Sector Response to HIV in the WHO European Region*, 2018.

<sup>185</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit* 9.

<sup>186</sup> UNAIDS Data 2019.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Central Asian Association of People living with HIV/AIDS, July 3, 2019.

<sup>188</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>190</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Central Asian Association of People living with HIV/AIDS, July 3, 2019.

as those who inject drugs, who have tuberculosis, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding.”<sup>192</sup> INL supports the UNI project, through the Global Health Research Center in Central Asia (GHRCCA). The UNI project engages with MSM who are drug users to get tested for HIV and subsequently link to friendly care and treatment services.<sup>193</sup>

USAID Central Asia HIV Flagship Activity provides services to people living with HIV (PLWHIV), people who inject drugs (PWID), and MSM, linking HIV+ clients to care and treatment, as well as testing services to their partners and those at highest risk of HIV. HIV React Project works to expand coverage and service provision for key populations in prisons and after release in accordance with the PEPFAR 90-90-90 goals (by 2020, 90 percent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 90 percent of all people diagnosed with HIV infection will receive sustained ART therapy; and 90 percent of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression). HIV React’s target groups are male and female PWID, ex-PWID, and PLHIV in prisons, and, following their release, their sexual partners. The LEADER for PLWHIV project works to strengthen organizational and leadership capacity of the Central Asia Association of People Living with HIV, its Secretariat and its member organizations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan to more effectively address stigma and discrimination; advocate for equitable access to comprehensive prevention, treatment, and care; and address human rights issues affecting PLHIV.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the country-specific recommendations below, the main report contains additional recommendations applicable to all country offices. It should be noted that donor coordination is beneficial in accomplishing many of the recommendations below. The Kazakhstan country office should join the UN Gender Working Group to learn about other donors’ activities and develop joint or complementary initiatives. This Working Group used to only have UN agencies as members but has since expanded to include other donors.

### Economic Growth

#### Trade and Markets

- *Support female entrepreneurs in non-traditional fields.* Specifically seek out women who are interested in starting a business in a field dominated by men, in order to actively address the issue of occupational segregation. Some projects such as CTJ (transport and logistics, tech) and PtF (energy), are already working with women in non-traditional fields; however a concerted effort, and collaboration between activities is required to identify the needs and best approaches to deliberately target this group of beneficiaries.
- *Support female entrepreneurs with disabilities.* Organizations such as Shyrak would be an excellent source that can help identify programming beneficiaries and develop a plan for this line of programming.

#### Energy

- *Support scholarships for young women in the energy sector.* In order to increase women’s participation in high-end decision-making positions in the energy sector, a pool of viable candidates must be created. Considering gender stereotypes which discourage girls to study STEM fields, scholarships and additional financial support may be sufficient incentives for them to choose the energy sector, and to relieve their parents of any education-related financial obligations. This can be accomplished in collaboration with the GoK, considering this sector is quite profitable.
- *Support women’s networks in sustainable energy.*
- *Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at Samruk-Energy and its subsidiaries.* Samruk-Energy has already signed UN Women’s Empowerment principles, signifying their commitment to gender equality. In collaboration with EBRD, who has been leading this

---

<sup>192</sup> ICAP, “Women Help Women Overcome HIV Stigma in Kazakhstan, with ICAP’s Support,” March 5, 2019, <https://icap.columbia.edu/women-help-women-to-overcome-hiv-stigma-in-kazakhstan-with-icaps-support/>, Last accessed July 31, 2019.

<sup>193</sup> Global Health Research Center of Central Asia, “UNI Project – At risk men’s involvement in HIV treatment continuum in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2017-2021),” 2019, [https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page\\_id=361](https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page_id=361), Last accessed July 31, 2019.



process, USAID can offer further targeted assistance with providing women with more opportunities in the field and elevating their contributions. An example of a very successful USG program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities.<sup>194</sup>

## **Water**

- *Enhance women’s decision-making in cooperatives and water-user groups.* While women are the primary users of water resources, decisions related to water management are in men’s hands. Working with local communities to discuss breaking down of entrenched gender stereotypes and showcasing women as capable managers of their households can help elevate women’s role in decision-making in IWRM. These changes can eventually lead to more opportunities for women’s participation in decision-making in the agriculture sector as a whole, where they represent the majority of the workforce.
- *Support media campaigns and awareness raising about women’s role in IWRM.* Partners may include organizations such as GWP CACENA, which is already experienced in social media promotion of gender equality in the water sector.

## **Democracy and Governance**

### **Civil Society**

- *Begin meaningful and strategic engagement with LGBTI groups and organizations.* Although the current environment for LGBTI groups in Kazakhstan is more liberal than in the other three countries, it still requires careful and strategic approaches. All LGBTI informants, however, stated there is room for USAID involvement in a careful and strategic way. LGBTI groups’ needs and priorities should be considered when engaging with them, which may include funding for mobilizing, helping train young activists, development of LGBTI-positive campaigns and social media content, internal organizational capacity-building, legislative advocacy, etc. Before engagement, however, USAID/CA staff should undergo social inclusion and gender/sexual diversity training to understand how to engage with these groups, using appropriate language, and being mindful of security and protection considerations. In addition, engaging with these groups from the standpoint of civil society, rather than health (HIV), will show to LGBTI community the USG’s acknowledgement of them as change agents, rather than passive beneficiaries of health-related services and information.
- *Explore strategies to bring more youth and men into the sector.* Considering that the CSO sector is dominated by women and is aging, bringing in new and fresh perspectives will benefit the sector. It is crucial that younger people are joining the sector in order to ensure its sustainability. Strategies may include organizing career fairs, events, and fora where CSOs can present about their activities to university students and youth, or media campaigns advertising CSO sector work as an exciting opportunity to bring about positive change and benefit the country.

### **Justice and Governance**

- *Support development of anti-sexual harassment legislation.* Sexual harassment is a pervasive element in women’s lives—they are harassed on the streets, on public transportation, and at work—yet they are not legally protected from such behavior.

### **Media**

- *Support quality local media content creation and campaigns to address gender stereotypes in the Kazakh language.*
- *Award a grant to an NGO to develop media skills in youth and link them with internships at media outlets.* These skills should include how to work with social media, digital marketing, and communications, all from a gender and social inclusion lens. After completing the course, the participants would

---

<sup>194</sup> USAID, “About: Engendering Utilities,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.

then move on to an internship. Participants should be both male and female, and include youth with disabilities and LGBTI youth.

## **CVE**

- *Include CVE component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking.* Migrants are one of the most susceptible groups to CVE. Any service provision activity aimed at this group, and their families, should also discuss dangers of CVE, ways to identify if they are being recruited, and tips for how to protect themselves.

## **CTIP**

- *Support a study on gender dynamics of trafficking and migration.* Current stereotypes promote an idea that women are victims of trafficking and that men are migrants. However, women are starting to migrate more, and there are currently more male than female victims of trafficking. Understanding the reasons men and women migrate, how they become victims of trafficking, and having preliminary baseline data are important in order to develop targeted future programming.
- *Support the GoK's engagement with regional governments on migration.* The current environment in Kazakhstan is not migrant-friendly. Many migrants are not entitled to free government-funded services such as TB and HIV treatments, staying in state shelters for victims of trafficking, or participating in income-generating opportunities. Additional barriers include migrants' lack of awareness of their legal rights, or what happens to their families after they have been trafficked. This is a very complicated issue that crosses borders and requires a regional response with the relevant governments involved and collaborating. One of the key gaps at the moment is that Uzbek migrants are required to register in Kazakhstan after five days in country, compared to Tajik and Kyrgyz citizens who have 30 days for registration. Working with the Uzbek government on changing this would be a good start. USAID can play an important role in encouraging, guiding and facilitating this cooperation, as well as strengthening Kazakhstan's internal anti-trafficking efforts so that it can be a more effective regional partner.
- *Support the Government of Kazakhstan to improve and adjust its legal and policy environment for migrants.* This entails promoting legal employment of the labor migrants, specifically by decreasing the state fees for receiving job permits and other benefits; increasing accountability of employers and employment entities for illegal labor force; and criminalizing all forms of servitude and servitude-like practices, including domestic servitude.



## Health

### TB

- *Use existing program opportunities to address stigma and gender barriers associated with TB among medical professionals.* This can be accomplished via information campaigns that dispel myths about TB that negatively affect women and provide further insights into economic and social benefits of completing TB treatment.

### HIV/AIDS

- *Support efforts to educate young people about reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STIs, and GBV.* The current school curriculum on these topics is inadequate. Work with NGOs and the Ministry of Health and Education to revise and expand the existing curriculum so that it is available online. Educational videos presented in an engaging way via YouTube or Facebook may have more traction with the young people, especially if they can re-watch them. Links to resources available online can also be helpful and allow the users to browse them at their leisure, without feeling the pressure of a classroom setting.
- *Support education and health care professionals in dealing with HIV+ vulnerable populations.* Health care professionals lack skills on how to properly service vulnerable populations such as MSM, transgender women, PWID, and pregnant women who are HIV+, therefore making the patients' experience very unpleasant.

## ANNEX I: GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS DOMAINS

### I. Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices

#### *Gender Equality*

Kazakhstan has strong legal commitment to equality and non-discrimination. Its Constitution guarantees equal rights to all. Since 2009, the Law of State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women has been in effect. It established the legal principle of equal rights, by identified spheres in which gender discrimination is prohibited, which include the civil service, the labor market, health care, education, and the family. The country is in process of developing anti-discrimination legislation, since there is no comprehensive definition of discrimination at this time. Kazakhstan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1998.

From 2006 to 2016, Kazakhstan implemented a Strategy on Gender Equality. The criticism of the strategy was that it lacked funding and government capacity to implement it, as well as clear indicators for measuring progress and that there was a disconnect between its objectives and those in State sectoral policies, line ministry strategic plans, central-level agencies, or local development plans.

Recently, this Strategy has been replaced with the *Concept on Family and Gender Policy 2030*, which is based on the principles of: “ensuring equality in the enjoyment of all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, regardless of gender; non-discrimination, prevention of gender asymmetry in state and public life; promoting gender consciousness and eliminating gender stereotypes in society.” The criticism of this Policy is that it combines concepts of gender and family. While they are addressed separately in the document, it is a concern that gender equality and women’s empowerment are presented alongside the preservation of family—two concepts that are not always in harmony, and, if forced together, can have harmful consequences, especially for women.

The national gender machinery, tasked with the implementation of Kazakhstan’s gender equality policies, is spearheaded by the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family, and Demographic Policy. This organ is also an advisory body to the President. However, the Commission’s effectiveness is questionable, especially given its lack of executive power. Based on stakeholder feedback, it seems that it has mostly served as a service provider, rather than a strong representative of women’s interests and change maker at the policy level. All 26 members of the Women’s Commission are volunteers, and only three are paid civil servants. They lack financing, and the political will to elevate its status seems to be absent. The Commission is present in all 16 regions of the country but, again, their representatives are volunteers who are Akimat employees. Perhaps due to the lack of capacity and influence exhibited by the Women’s Commission, the existing legal framework, while supporting and guaranteeing gender equality, does not translate into practice, resulting in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and hampering of opportunities in the economic, education, and other sectors for women and other marginalized groups. Some key strategic documents for development of Kazakhstan, such as “Kazakhstan 2030,” “Kazakhstan 2050,” and “100 Steps,” are gender blind. The country is lacking in anti-sexual harassment legislation, as well as effective legislation to address human trafficking. The environment of questionable political will to fully embrace concrete steps to implement the existing gender-sensitive laws and policies, is perhaps a result of a common perception that gender equality has been fully achieved in Kazakhstan, based on the Soviet legacy of women’s empowerment and the fact that the country is scoring much better in international gender equality indicators than other countries in the region.

Pension reform is currently underway in Kazakhstan, which will, by 2020, equalize women’s and men’s retirement age (currently at 58 years for women, and 63 years for men), and increase benefits to self-employed workers and (primarily) female workers who take time out of the workforce for childcare responsibilities.

## *Gender-Based Violence*

Since 2009, the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence has been in effect. In 2016, the Standard of Provision of Special Social Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, was adopted by Decree of the Minister of Health and Social Development in order to regulate governmental and non-governmental service providers including crisis centers, shelters, and other organizations that offer services to domestic violence victims. The 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy identified the prevention of GBV in society as one of its goals. Likewise, the Concept on Family and Gender Policy 2030 is committed to the elimination of GBV, via activities that include: 1) coordination and development of inter-agency collaboration in prevention of GBV against women and girls and protection, including in conflict situations; 2) zero tolerance to any forms of violence against women, children, especially GBV (physical violence against boys; emotional violence against girls); 3) continued efforts to cut short and counteract crimes against women and minors; and 4) continued support to victims of gender-based discrimination and violence; improvement of the system for collection and analysis of violence against women statistics. In Kazakhstan, GBV is decriminalized; however there have been recent efforts to criminalize it. In 2016, the General Prosecutor's Office developed a multi-sectoral plan *Kazakhstan Free from Domestic Violence*, which includes aligning national legislation with international standards and best practices in prevention and response to domestic violence, as well as strengthening inter-departmental cooperation and developing a comprehensive system of support for survivors of violence, including legal advice, psychological help, shelter, and information services. In addition, in collaboration with NGOs, the GoK is supporting studies to identify the underlying causes of violence against women and children and has made investments in public monitoring of current legislation, hotlines, and awareness-raising activities with the aim of preventing domestic violence.

## *People With Disabilities*

Kazakhstan employs a medical approach to disability, which views people with disabilities as medical cases, and is in opposition to the CRPD, which Kazakhstan ratified in 2015, and which views disability from the lens of human rights and empowerment. In fact, the 2005 law on the directions for disability policy uses the discriminatory word "invalid." However, disability-related legislation has improved over the past years. The law prohibits discrimination based on disability (physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental) in employment, education, and access to health care, and in the provision of other government services. Since passing of the 2008 Law on Specialized Social Services, the number of available in-home care for persons with disabilities has more than doubled; the profession of social workers was introduced, and a system for financing these services was set up. The 2016 Law No. 482-V on Employment mandates that companies are required to set aside between 2 percent and 4 percent of their jobs for persons with disabilities, excluding positions that involve heavy work or work in harmful or hazardous conditions. Local authorities (Akimats) can set regional quotas for certain employers. However, this requirement is not enforced or monitored in any way.

## *LGBTI*

LGBTI individuals lack legal protection, as sexual orientation and gender identity are not listed as protected grounds in the Article 14 of the Kazakh Constitution, which places prohibition against discrimination based on the "reasons of origin, social, property status, occupation, sex, race, nationality, language, attitude towards religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances." However, over the past several years, the attempts to pass anti-LGBTI legislation have failed. Same-sex sexual activity is not criminalized in Kazakhstan, as it is in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

One of the biggest challenges for transgender individuals is changing their name and gender marker on identity documents. The law requires them to undergo lengthy psychiatric evaluation, as well as sterilization, hormonal therapy, and genital surgeries, before they are able to receive identity documents that align with their gender identity. Genital surgeries are only available at one clinic in Almaty, making it costly and inaccessible for most people. Many transgender individuals, unable to afford the mandatory surgeries, or choosing to go through this process, live with nonconforming documents for years and face problems with securing employment, housing, and health care.

## *Youth*

The 2015 Law On State Youth Policy aims to “create conditions for the full spiritual, cultural, educational, professional and physical development of young people, to participate in the decision-making process, successful socialization and channeling its potential for further development of the country.” In late 2018, the country developed a road map for the implementation of the 2020 State Youth Policy Concept (2019 is the Year of Youth in Kazakhstan). The road map includes 11 areas of activity: education, employment, health protection, affordable housing, youth entrepreneurship development, upgrading financial capability, legal culture, increasing intolerance to corruption, strengthening patriotism, support of talented youth, development infrastructure, and coverage of state youth policy implementation in mass media.

Since 2017, the State has been providing free technical and vocational education, food, scholarships, accommodations, and travel expenses to young people without secondary or higher education, as well as other vulnerable groups to reduce unemployment. Due to the inefficiencies of public employment services, which lack listings of high-quality jobs; infrequently provide social assistance and unemployment benefits; and, as such, proportion of youth employed in permanent jobs from among those who used public employment services decreased from 87.1 percent in 2010 to 59.3 percent in 2018.

## *Health*

Kazakhstan has a strong legal framework for the protection of health and access to health care services including the Constitution; the Code of Population Health and Health Care; the Law On Mandatory Social Health Insurance (2015); the State Program of the Development of Health Care – “Densaulyk” (2016); Decrees of the Ministry of Health on pregnancy termination; the introduction of youth-friendly services; and the Roadmap of Strengthening Reproductive Health of Citizens of Kazakhstan.

## *Anti-Trafficking/Migration*

In December 2018, Kazakhstan signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. Its Concept of Migration Policy is in line with the expected economic, social, and demographic development of the country, its foreign policy, and with the integration processes within the EEU, and with worldwide globalization trends. The country has a 2006 Plan of Action to Combat and Prevent Offenses Involving Trafficking in Persons which is updated every three years. However, it is not in line with international standards. For example, it allows for conciliation between parties, its systems to identify and support trafficking victims are insufficient, and it allows for deportation of trafficking victims. However, there have been increased government efforts to prosecute traffickers and cases of police collusion, and to establish shelters for trafficking victims.

## **II. Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

Despite some progressive laws and policies on gender equality, patriarchal norms, which have been strengthened through the process of national identity building in the post-Soviet period, along with a plethora of gender stereotypes, remain strong. This is the case especially in rural areas and in the south of the country, where harmful traditional practices including early marriage, polygamy, and bride kidnapping can be found. In urban areas, attitudes about gender equality are more egalitarian. However, established gender roles still dictate that women should be the primary care takers of children, the elderly, and their households, even if they have full-time paid work, and that men are the breadwinners and decision-makers.

Due to social stigma attached to disability, families of disabled children and adults are often ashamed of them, keep them in the house away from education and other opportunities, and control their state disability pensions.

The LGBTI population in Kazakhstan experiences stigma and stereotypes, exhibited through the lens of patriarchal and hetero-normative ways the society is structured. The lack of information available in Kazakh language on sexual health issues, myths that LGBTI people are “others,” and not Kazakh, contribute to an environment that views same sex relations as something shameful. In a society that highly values heterosexual relationships, and concept of marriage in particular, it is not uncommon for a gay man to marry a heterosexual woman, while continuing to have relationships and sex with men. The secrecy

under which this type of behavior often takes place can lead to unintended consequences, including STIs and HIV. Discrimination is more visible in the rural areas, and among more traditional communities, including the Turkish and the Chechen, as well as among the Kazakh speaking community.

PLWHIV often experience stigma and discrimination, and therefore frequently hide their positive status from their communities. Legal discrimination against this group entails not allowing them to adopt a child, serve in the military, or obtain Kazakh citizenship or a residence permit. HIV+ people with disabilities are not entitled to have an individual assistant, an allowance provided by the state for people with disabilities. Eighteen (18) percent of people living with HIV in Kazakhstan report being denied health services. Nearly 10 percent of pregnant women with HIV who seek medical treatment are strongly encouraged by the health professionals to have an abortion.

### **III. Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

Obstacles to women's participation in business are both societal and structural. At the societal level, societal expectations of women often guide their decisions. For example, some women are not interested to grow their businesses out of fear that the society will think they are acting like men; and out of fear of risk and failure. There is also skepticism about women's abilities from many men, and mothers-in-law. In addition, since women are expected to be in charge of childcare responsibilities, the struggle to achieve work-life balance in an environment where there is a lack of affordable childcare, can get in the way of their desires to start a business. In fact, only 8.5 percent of children 0-2 are enrolled in childcare; there are long waiting lists for government-subsidized childcare; private childcare is 2/3 times as expensive; and there are no financial incentives for fathers to take paternal leave. Being in charge of childcare often limits women to home-based production activities which do not interfere with their household activities. Women also experience a double burden, where, despite participation in paid employment outside their homes, they still perform the majority of tasks related to child rearing and household maintenance. In fact, time-use studies of women and men reveal that women spend three hours more per day than men on household activities. However, some recent GoK data reveals that this trend may be changing. In 2018, women spent 12.8 percent of their time on unpaid domestic work, compared to men's 11.9 percent. In 2010, women reported spending 17.1 percent, and men 7.7 percent of their time on unpaid home work. This change means that men are taking on more domestic work, therefore making space for women to pursue other activities. Family support, especially the husband's, is crucial in making women's business a success.

In rural areas, restricted access to water means that women's time spent on transport and treatment of water cuts into their time to perform other duties, or to work on a business, therefore potentially keeping them away from income generating opportunities. For example, reports from women in small remote villages with high female unemployment and limited supplies of gas and water show that 90-100 percent of their time is spent primarily on water collection.

### **IV. Access to and Control Over Assets and Resources**

The country has reached near gender parity in education, with 99.7 percent of adult women having reached at least a secondary level of education compared with 10 percent of their male counterparts. However, there is occupational segregation in higher education, as well as in the labor market. Women's labor participation rate in 2018 was 65.4 percent, compared to men's at 77.2 percent. As in many other countries worldwide, there is gender occupational segregation in Kazakhstan. Women are primarily in the service sector—71.4 percent of women and 52 percent of men. The percentage of women employed in agriculture declined by 34 percent from 2006 to 2016; however they are remaining in lower-paying service sector positions rather than accessing higher-paying industrial jobs. Women are also underrepresented in construction (20.2 percent), and under one-fifth in mining and quarrying, and in transportation and storage. Lack of women in some of these sectors may be due to the government's legal restrictions on women working in 25 occupational categories, including metalworking, mining, metallurgical works, and cement production. However, informants shared that the ban was recently revisited and that about a third of the banned jobs were taken off the list. Although the Labor Code provides for the right to equal remuneration for men and women, this is not the case. In 2015, women paid workers earned only 65.9 percent of what men earned. However, it should be noted that different wage differentials are present in different

industries. For example, in administrative and support services, women earn more than men at 111 percent, and in education and health, although dominated by women, they still earn 90 percent of what men's salaries. In more male-dominated fields, including information and communications, women earn only 67.2 percent of men's earnings, and in finance and insurance only 65.2 percent. Women in professional, scientific, and technical activities earn only 59 percent of men's salaries.

Women in Kazakhstan are active in SMEs. Forty-two (42) percent of economically active SMEs are women owned, but they are mostly micro and small businesses. Structural obstacles to women's SMEs include: less access to information and technical support, and networks than men; and women are less likely to take out loans, as they prefer to rely on savings for financing, or lack collateral (property is often registered in husband's name). The interest rate for bank loans between 15 to 20 percent annually is considered unfavorable by most small businesses. The Government's Damu Entrepreneurship Fund provides micro-loans to female entrepreneurs.

## **V. Patterns of Power and Decision-Making**

Women and marginalized groups are underrepresented in governance in decision-making positions. In the Lower House of the Parliament, women make up 27.6 percent and 22.2 percent in local representative bodies. According to some informants, women's participation in politics is not a realistic indicator of women's empowerment, since they obtained these positions as a reward for their support of the male political elite. While women make up 55 percent of the civil service positions, they represent only 10 percent politically appointed civil servants. Women represent about 28 percent of the directors of Kazakh SMEs.

## ANNEX 2: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdykalikova, Gulshara . “State Secretary of the Republic of Kazakhstan Charts the Country’s Challenging Journey on the Road to Gender Equality,” Last modified November 30, 2018. <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/kazakhstan-challenging-road-to-gender-equality/55185>
- ALMA-TQ. “Violations by Kazakhstan of the Right of Transgender Persons to Legal Recognition of Gender Identity.” Submitted for consideration at the 117th Session of the Human Rights Committee, Geneva, June-July 2016.
- Amnesty International. “Less Equal: LGBTI Human Rights Defenders in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan,” 2017.
- Amnesty International. “‘We Are Like Dead Souls.’ Life without Legal Capacity in Kazakhstan,” 2018.
- Asian Development Bank. Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment. December 2018.
- Avert, “HIV and AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview,” January 18, 2019, <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>.
- Bell, Dylan. “Samruk-Energy signs UN Women’s Empowerment Principles,” ERBD, March 7, 2019, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/samrukenergy-signs-un-womens-empowerment-principles.html>,
- Chumachenko, Alexandr. “Rules for employing disabled people in Kazakhstan,” IUS Laboris, August 1, 2017, <https://theword.iuslaboris.com/hrlaw/insights/rules-for-employing-disabled-people-in-kazakhstan>.
- Eliseera, Ekaterina. “Budget for TB treatment increased in Kazakhstan in 2019,” Kazpravda, March 15, 2019, <https://www.kazpravda.kz/en/news/society/budget-for-tb-treatment-increased-in-kazakhstan-in-2019>.
- The Equality Institute, The Sample Survey on Domestic Violence, 2017.
- ESCAP. *Examining Women’s Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.
- Europlus. Gender Study for Central Asia: Kazakhstan Final Report. November 2017.
- Global Health Research Center of Central Asia, “UNI Project – At risk men’s involvement in HIV treatment continuum in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2017-2021),” 2019, [https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page\\_id=361](https://eng.ghrcca.org/?page_id=361).
- The Government of Kazakhstan. Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016.
- “GWP CACENA Joins International Women’s Day Campaign,” GWP, Last modified March 9, 2019, <https://www.gwp.org/en/CACENA/News/gwp-cacena-joins-international-womens-day-campaign>.
- Human Rights Watch. “‘On the Margins’: Education for Children with Disabilities in Kazakhstan.” 2019.
- ICAP, “Women Help Women Overcome HIV Stigma in Kazakhstan, with ICAP’s Support,” March 5, 2019, <https://icap.columbia.edu/women-help-women-to-overcome-hiv-stigma-in-kazakhstan-with-icaps-support/>.
- ICJ. “Women’s Access to Justice in Kazakhstan: Identifying the Obstacles & Need for Change.” 2013.
- Internews, “Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign Led by Local Media in Kazakhstan Leads to Demands for Policy Change,” April 1, 2019. <https://internews.org/updates/anti-sexual-harassment-campaign-led-local-media-kazakhstan-leads-demands-policy-change>.
- IWPR, *The Situation of the Civil society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*, 2018.
- Junisbai, Barbara, and Azamat Junisbai. 2018. “Are Youth Different? The Nazarbayev Generation and Public Opinion in Kazakhstan.” *Problems of Post-Communism*, October. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1520602>. “Kazakhstan Boosts Youth Policy

- Implementation with New Road Map.” 2018. Kazinform. November 25, 2018. [https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map\\_a3463779](https://www.inform.kz/en/kazakhstan-boosts-youth-policy-implementation-with-new-road-map_a3463779).
- Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2019.
- Mynbayeva, Jans. Wonder Foundation Insight Report: Women in Kazakhstan. Wonder Foundation, (n.d.).
- OECD. “Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan. A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities,” 2017.
- OECD. OECD Gender Policy Delivery Review: Kazakhstan: Highlights, 2017.
- OECD. Social Institutions & Gender Index for Kazakhstan, 2019.
- OSCE, “Women, water and security,” August 12, 2015, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/176671>.
- OSCE, “Youth and the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Workshop on Perspectives from Central Asia,” 2017, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/315296>.
- Podzic, Mersiha Causevic. “Empowering women water professionals - #WorldWaterDay,” March 18, 2016 <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/228816>.
- “Social Assistance for Disabled Persons,” egov.KZ, Last modified June 20, 2019. <https://egov.kz/cms/en/articles/invalids>
- Project Hope. Kazakhstan, Last modified November 10, 2010, <https://www.projecthope.org/kazakhstan/>.
- Stevan Weine and Eric Rosand, “Repatriating ISIS Families: An Opportunity to Show that ‘Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism’ Can Work,” Just Security, June 14, 2019, <https://www.justsecurity.org/64567/repatriating-isis-families-an-opportunity-to-show-that-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-can-work/>.
- Stop TB, “Kazakhstan: Tuberculosis Situation in 2017,” Last modified June 19, 2017, [http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ\\_Dashboard.html](http://www.stoptb.org/resources/cd/KAZ_Dashboard.html).
- Student Energy Challenge, Kazenergy, 2019, <http://kazenergyforum.com/en/student-energy-challenge>.
- UNDP, Human Development Report 2018, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KAZ>.
- UNDP, Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia, Regional Brief 2018.
- United States Department of State. Kazakhstan 2018 Human Rights Report. 2018.
- U.S. State Department, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Kazakhstan, June 28, 2018. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b09a.html>.
- UN Women, “Kazakhstan’s domestic violence crisis centres save lives, need funds,” 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/11/kazakhstan-domestic-violence-crisis-centres-save-lives-need-funds>.
- UN Women, “Kazakhstan’s new plan to end domestic violence demonstrates multi-disciplinary action,” 2017. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/8/feature-kazakhstan-plan-to-end-domestic-violence-demonstrates-multi-disciplinary-action>.
- USAID, “About: Engendering Utilities,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.
- USAID, “Kazakhstan: Global Health,” May 7, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/kazakhstan/global-health>.
- USAID/Central Asia. Summary Gender Analysis: Kazakhstan, 2012.
- USAID/Central Asia, Workshop on “Gender integration to the energy sector of Central Asian countries,” August 10, 2018, <http://ptfcar.org/en/blog/2018/10/workshop-on-gender-integration-to-energy-sector-of-central-asian-countries/>.



WHO. Compendium of good practices in the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region, 2018.

Women in Energy: UNECE Supports Strengthened Capacities and Knowledge Among Officials and Stakeholders from Central Asia,” UNECE, (n.d.), <https://www.unece.org/info/media/news/sustainable-energy/2018/women-in-energy-unece-supports-strengthened-capacities-and-knowledge-among-officials-and-stakeholders-from-central-asia/doc.html>.

World Bank. “Poverty and Equity.” Country Dashboard: Kazakhstan. 2016.

“Youth Policy of Kazakhstan: State Programs, Values and Socialization.” 2018. Strategy2050.KZ. [https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth\\_policy\\_of\\_kazakhstan\\_state\\_programs\\_values\\_and\\_socialization\\_\\_\\_\\_51269](https://strategy2050.kz/en/news/youth_policy_of_kazakhstan_state_programs_values_and_socialization____51269).

Yussupjanov, Parkhat. “In Kazakhstan, Having a Disability Often Means Not Getting a Vote,” Open Society Foundations, November 16, 2016. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/kazakhstan-having-disability-often-means-not-getting-vote>.

“Zangar,” International Youth Foundation, 2017, <https://www.iyfnet.org/initiatives/zangar>

## **ANNEX 3: GSIA KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**

### **July 1, 2019**

- Stephanie Garvey, Regional DG director, and DG specialists (Madina Kusmoldanova, Ainura Zhamieva, Inna Biryukova, and Irina Mitrofanova) (USAID)
- Dinara Amanzholova, USAID/Kazakhstan office Gender PoC (USAID)
- Acting EG Director (Energy), Svetlana Golovatskaya, COR for CTJ project, Lora Kudaibergenova, COR for Energy Links project, Anara Yesdauletova (USAID)
- Madina Kusmoldanova, media portfolio, Ainura Zhamieva, civil society portfolio, Inna Biryukova, C-TIP (USAID)
- LGBTI informant (anonymous)

### **July 2, 2019**

- Health and education team/representatives: Sholpan Makhmudova – Proj. Mgt. Spec/Gender POC, Inna Kirilyuk – Proj. Mng. Ass/Youth Coordinator, Lidiya Beisembayeva – Admin. Asst./LGBTI Coordinator, Dairov Arman – Proj. Mgt. Spec, Andrew Colburn – Regional Education Officer, Daniel VerSchneider – HEO Deputy Director (USAID)
- LGBTI Coordinator, Lidiya Beisembayeva (USAID)
- Youth Coordinator, Inna Kirilyuk, Project Mgmt. Specialists, Ainur Zhamieva, Elena Samarkina, Youth POC, Turkmenistan (via phone) (USAID)
- FGD with Gender and Inclusive Development group (USAID)
- Power the Future (PtF), Bayan Abylkairova and Tleubaldy Ayaulym (via phone)
- Smart Waters, Anna Inozemtseva, Leading Specialist, Tatiana Shakirova, Advisor to CAREC Executive Director, Lyudmila Kiktenko, Program Manager

### **July 3, 2019**

- Internews, Ms Zarina Akhmatova, Regional Business Media Advisor, Irina Mednikova, Regional Program Coordinator, and Erzhan Suleimenov Country Program Director
- KZ Union of People Living With HIV, Oksana Ibragimova, Amanzholov Nurali, President, and Lyubov Vorontsova, Advocacy Specialist
- CTJ (DAI), Geoff Wright, Chief of Party, Lyudmila Firsova, Deputy Chief of Party, Zaure Abdiraman, Technical Director, and Vassiliy Lakhonin, Training Coordinator
- EBRD, Alma Kassymova, National Programme Manager, Small Business Support Team (SBS) Kazakhstan
- Just Support Foundation/TEENs, Svetlana Bogatyreva, Executive Director

### **July 4, 2019**

- LGBTI informant (anonymous)
- LGBTI informant (anonymous)
- Association of disabled women “Shyrak,” Lyazzat Kaltayeva, Chairperson

### **July 5, 2019**

- IOM, Ms. Aliya Belonossova (Alikova), National Officer
- Women’s Leadership Fund, Ms. Maria Gusseinova, Executive Director
- ARGO, Dzhamilya Asanova, CEO, and Kaisha Atakanova
- Global Health Research Center for Central Asia, Mr. Vitaly Vinogradov

### **July 22, 2019**

- UN Women, Elaine Conkievich, Representative

## ANNEX 5: GSIA COUNTRY REPORT – TAJIKISTAN

### CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary .....	83
2.	Introduction .....	86
3.	Methodology and Limitations.....	86
4.	Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion .....	87
4.1	People With Disabilities.....	88
4.2	LGBTI .....	89
4.3	Youth.....	89
4.4	Gender-Based Violence.....	89
5.	Findings by Sector.....	90
5.1	Economic Growth .....	91
5.1.1	Trade and Markets .....	91
5.1.2	Energy.....	92
5.1.3	Water .....	93
5.2	Democracy and Governance .....	93
5.2.1	Civil Society.....	93
5.2.2	Media .....	94
5.2.3	Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).....	94
5.2.4	Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP).....	95
5.3	Education .....	95
5.4	Health .....	96
5.4.1	Tuberculosis.....	96
5.4.2	HIV/AIDS.....	96
6.	Recommendations .....	97
	Annex 1: Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis Domains .....	101
	Annex 2: Bibliography.....	105
	Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews .....	107

## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ATI	Access to Information
CA	Central Asia
CAMP	Central Asia Media Project
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CJT	Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs Activity
CRPD	Convention on Rights of the People with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTIP	Countering Trafficking in Persons
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CWFA	Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DPO	Disabled Persons Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EG	Economic Growth
FtF	Feed the Future
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
GSIA	Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labor Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MDR-TB	Multi-Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis
MSM	Men having Sex with Men
NABWT	National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan
NDS	National Development Strategy for 2015-2030
NEET	No Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OJSC	Open Joint Stock Holding Company
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
RDCS	Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TAWA	Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity
TB	Tuberculosis
TEI	Tajik Education Institute
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tajikistan is located in the south-east of Central Asia and borders Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and China. 29.7 percent<sup>195</sup> of the population of the country lives below the national poverty line of \$1.90 a day.<sup>196</sup> The population of Tajikistan is 9 million, including 49 percent women, 40.6 percent—children under 18, and 66 percent of young adults under 30.<sup>197</sup>

The country has a well-developed framework for gender equality, as well as numerous pieces of legislation addressing various aspects of economic development, health, countering violent extremism (CVE), trafficking, youth, and social protection. The country is also a signatory to key international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Child, the United Nations (UN) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, International Labor Organization (ILO) Forced Labor Convention, and the ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor.

While the legal framework for equality is relatively good for the region, in reality, there is a general lack of political will and capacity to implement it. Interestingly, Tajikistan has a unique experience in tackling traditional norms and practices through legislative efforts. In 2007, the country adopted the Law on “Streamlining of traditions, celebrations and ceremonies” with an amendment in 2017. The Law, labeled by journalists as “crackdown on traditions,” featured a powerful media campaign against such events (lavish weddings, for example), and enforcement implementation mechanisms resulted in regulated traditional celebrations and ceremonies that were far exceeding any expectations. This example shows that legislation can be very effective in tackling stereotypes justified by culture and traditional values, if an effort is put forth in implementation and monitoring.

The key challenges to gender inequality in Tajikistan stem from gender stereotypes that prescribe narrow, socially preferred roles for men and women. Deviations from those roles are not welcome. Girls are taught from young age to be submissive and hardworking in order to find a husband. As a result, girls drop out of school around 15 years of age, and are underrepresented in higher education, and technical and vocational education, especially in non-traditional courses such as science, agriculture, engineering, information and communications technology (ICT), energy, and mathematics. Once they are in the work force, women are concentrated in sectors such as health and education that have lower salaries. They often have to balance motherhood and unpaid housework with keeping a full-time job, with insufficient childcare options available across the country. Women’s important roles in agriculture, water, and energy management are not recognized by the society. Women’s lack of representation in the fields that are considered “non-traditional” for them, such as agriculture, electricity, and water, contributes to lack of understanding of how sector reforms and infrastructure development may negatively impact women.

Women are underrepresented as political and business leaders in Tajikistan. Civil society is dominated by women, and, as such, provides an opportunity for women’s voices to be heard, However, it is heavily regulated by the government and, as such, its effectiveness in the promotion of gender equality, women’s empowerment, human rights, and social inclusion is stifled.

Stereotypes, negative cultural perceptions, and stigma are associated with many multiple vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) community, people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB), victims of domestic violence (DV), and divorced women. These groups experience discrimination from their families, their communities, and the State. For example, the LGBTI community is frequently mistreated by health care providers and harassed by law enforcement officers.

---

<sup>195</sup> Closing Remarks by President Rahmon, National Development Forum and Development Forum, 2018.

<sup>196</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Indices and Indicators: Statistical Update*, 2018.

<sup>197</sup> UNDP, *National Report on Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018. <http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/library/poverty/national-report-on-implementation-of-strategic-documents-of-the-.html>

Considering the environment described above, there is no shortage of opportunities for the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) inclusive development agenda. Recommendations for such activities include:

#### Non-Sector Specific

- Closely coordinate with the relevant donor organizations and the State Agency on Statistics about developing new National Agency on Statistics Strategy inclusive of gender and social inclusion dimensions.
- Support the Government in adoption and implementation of: 1) a comprehensive multi-stakeholder strategy to promote gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes; and 2) gender-sensitive national communications strategy (also CEDAW Committee Recommendations).
- Consider the Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan (CWFA) as one of the key USAID/Tajikistan Country office's partners in the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion. Given the Committee's multiple roles and work across sectors, it is a good entry point for providing support across sectors and themes: entrepreneurship, gender-based violence (GBV), migration, data collection, etc.
- Support local administration, community-based organizations, and communities in integrating gender perspectives in development and implementation of local development plans.
- Support community-level interventions that promote changes in gender roles and responsibilities. An entry point for this type of intervention is the fact that many Tajik women are already heads of households, due to their husbands working abroad. This dynamic challenges existing interpretations of gender roles, and it will be important to present it as a positive change that contributes to the entire family's wellbeing.
- Use soft advocacy methods to address LGBTI issues with the government and international organizations, for example, through encouraging inclusion of UN recommendations about LGBTI issues in national action plans.

#### Economic Growth

- Support non-traditional livelihood opportunities for women that are gender transformative (information technology [IT] specialists, mechanics, welders, bloggers, etc.).
- Work with both male and female community leaders, groups, and committees on promoting gender behavioral change, to allow for greater participation of men in domestic and care responsibilities, which would enable women to have time to access agriculture training, technical assistance, and other income-generating activities.
- Get involved in addressing occupational segregation through cooperating with the National Development Strategy (NDS) Steering Committee and its sub-working groups (the issue is included in the agenda of the Steering committee).
- Support women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations, e.g., the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan (NABWT), to expand their vocational courses to include non-traditional offerings to women. Building the capacity of these organizations will make them more sustainable.
- Work with higher education and vocational institutions to recruit young women to study non-traditional female fields—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), agriculture, integrated water resources management (IWRM). This approach can contain multiple activities and can be accomplished via many projects and sectors.
- Operational: Re-instate USAID/Tajikistan office's economic growth (EG) staff and implementing partners' (IPs) annual training on Feed the Future's (FtF) Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).
- Continue supporting the Ministry of Education as it rolls out courses on women's right to land (these courses have been piloted in Khatlon in grade 10 and are supposed to be available throughout the country).
- Continue awareness-raising among the general public and women on the land rights, benefits, and how to practically use them, including tailored public outreach for rural women about agriculture,

land rights, and sharing success stories of women heads of *dehkan* farms. Outreach to rural women should be tailored and responsive to their needs, which may mean the newspaper in Tajik, rather than social media.

- Support media and education awareness-raising campaigns that combat customary law which prevents women from inheriting movable and immovable assets.
- In coordination with other donors working on land reform, continue supporting women's land rights through provision of legal aid and awareness raising.
- Continue providing guidance to the Inter-ministerial Land Working Group on gender-sensitive legislation.
- Identify select higher education and vocational institutions and help them develop strategies for recruitment of women into STEM fields of study. Strategies may include scholarships, awards for women and vulnerable groups, assistance with transportation and living costs, gender-stereotype breaking awareness-raising targeting their parents and families, etc.
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at Barki Tojik. An example of a very successful United States Government (USG) program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities.<sup>198</sup> Some strategies resulting in increased participation of women in the sector under this program, could include “Bring your daughter to work day,” supporting youth energy clubs in school, providing mentorship opportunities, and offering STEM scholarships to women and vulnerable groups, linked with internship and employment opportunities at Barki Tojik.
- Continue supporting events, conferences, awards, and networking opportunities that promote women's visibility in the power sector.
- Join Gender Working Group within the Tajikistan Water Supply and Sanitation Network in order to learn, share information and coordinate with other donors and the GoT on gender issues in the water sector.
- Support a study of women in IWRM across the country to identify challenges, opportunities, best practices, and lessons learned in the context of Tajikistan.

#### Democracy and Governance

- Engage with LGBTI organizations on their own terms while respecting their confidentiality and understanding high levels of risks.
- Build capacity of disabled persons organizations (DPOs).
- Conduct studies to explore pulling and pushing factors engaging young Tajik men and women in radical movements.
- Support youth civil society organizations (CSOs) and online media platforms to foster dialogue, critical thinking, and discussions on violent extremism amongst youth.
- Foster youth activism through capacity-building and networking within the country and region.
- Support the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) to ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- Support development and sustainability of social media channels that promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes and harmful norms. Examples of such movements include the *Nemolchi* Campaign in Central Asia and Tajik Mama Facebook community in Tajikistan.
- Support development and dissemination of information on gender equality, human rights, LGBTI communities, people with disabilities, etc. in the Tajik language.
- Support capacity-building of women and people with disabilities in social media and journalism via opportunities to participate in regional and international conferences and events, relevant trainings, etc.

---

<sup>198</sup> USAID, “About: Engendering Utilities,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.

## Education

- Undertake a gender analysis of all textbooks, curricula, and teaching materials for primary and secondary education, including at the university level, and revise them to remove discriminatory gender stereotypes.
- Conduct a series of trainings for authors and illustrators of school textbooks.
- Support series of gender trainings for teaching personnel at all levels of education and integrate mandatory modules on women's rights and gender equality education into school curricula.
- Support trainings for teachers that foster zero-tolerance of violence against children; encourage teachers to focus on positive aspects of students' behavior and achievements as alternative to the corporal punishment; and raise teachers' awareness of consequences of corporal punishment, including worsening students' performance, school dislike, and asocial behavior at a later age, as well as mental and health side-effects.

## Health

- Address stigmatization and discrimination of the people with TB through capacity-building and awareness raising of health sector staff and the general public.
- Conduct a survey on the population's access to TB services from a gender lens.
- Support the social partnership between CSOs and the GoT for TB and HIV prevention and treatment efforts.
- Continue supporting awareness raising and knowledge dissemination about HIV transmission, especially among young people and adolescents.
- Continue supporting awareness raising and education on preventing stigmatization of people with HIV among health sector staff and the general public.
- Support gender-sensitive awareness raising campaigns to change public perceptions about ways to contract TB and HIV, and disability as part of human diversity, rather than a disease to be cured.
- Lobby for decriminalization of intentional HIV transmission (Criminal Code, Article 125).

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan country reports are the main building blocks for the overarching gender and social inclusion analysis (GSIA) report for USAID/Central Asia's new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS).

Country-level findings in these four reports demonstrate how men and women are faring in their respective countries, and what challenges they are facing, along with vulnerable groups that include people with disabilities; LGBTI persons; youth; and ethnic and religious minorities, where applicable. Gaps identified in these reports provide the basis for recommendations for USAID's actions in each respective country. The findings in this report are presented sectorally, however additional presentation of findings through the lens of five domains of gender analysis is in Annex I.

## 3. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The GSIA team conducted a desk review of relevant documents (Annex 2); as well as held 16 interviews with diverse stakeholders, in person and via Skype/phone, and two focus group discussions—one with the IPs and one with the United States (U.S.) Embassy Gender Working Group in Dushanbe. In addition, the team visited Bokhtar region, where they met a local NGO and two groups of female beneficiaries of the FtF Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA). (Annex 3). Results from the staff and IP GSIA survey were also taken into account in the development of this report. Limitations included unavailability of respondents, as many were away on leave, which was also reflected in the low survey turnout rate. The team noted that presence of USAID staff in some interviews might have influenced the types of answers provided by the respondents, especially by the IPs. Although the team made it clear that the purpose of the interviews was not to evaluate their activities, the IPs would often, if USAID staff were present, focus on presenting their project's gender-related accomplishments, rather than on providing more tailored answers to the questions asked. Without the presence of USAID staff, the respondents seemed more relaxed, and the conversations were able to flow in a more informal manner.



#### 4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Tajikistan has a solid gender legal and policy framework, as well numerous pieces of legislation addressing health, CVE, trafficking, youth, and social protection, including:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, (Article 17) (2013)
- Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women” (2005)
- Law on the Prevention of Violence in the Family (2013) and subsequent State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014-2023
- Law on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2010), and the National Action Plan on Prevention of Human Trafficking for the period of 2016-2018
- The National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2011-2020
- The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030 in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- National Strategy on Youth Policy for the period until 2020
- State program for the education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2017-2022
- Law on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (2015)
- Program on Reproductive Health of Women for the period 2015-2020
- The National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2010-2020
- The National Program to Combat HIV Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2017-2020
- The State program for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV for 2017-2020
- The National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for 2016-2020
- The Labor Code, 2016 (prohibits discrimination based on sex in labor relations). There is only one general article in the Criminal Code devoted to discrimination, which covers discrimination based on sex, age, nationality, or religion. There is no legislation for sexual harassment in the workplace.

Tajikistan has acceded to a number of international conventions, including the CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of Child, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, ILO Forced Labor Convention, and the ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor.

**Table 1: Gender Equality International Indices Rankings for Tajikistan**

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Gender Development Index (GDI) (2018)	Male-female achievement ratio in: health; education; and command over economic resources. (Group 1 – high equality; group 2 – medium-high equality; group 3 – medium equality; group 4 – medium-low equality; group 5 countries – low equality)	0.933 (Group 3-medium equality)
UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2018)	Five indicators: maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rate, seats in the national Parliament, population with at least secondary education, and labor force participation. Measurement is between 0 and 1. The higher the GII value, the more disparities between females and males.	0.317
OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (2019)	Five dimensions: 1) discriminatory family code, 2) restricted physical integrity, 3) son bias, 4) restricted resources and assets, and 5) restricted civil liberties. Countries are ranked as very low, low, medium, high, or very high. Zero percent for no discrimination to 100 percent for very high discrimination.	Medium discrimination (32 percent)

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (2018) (GGGI)	Measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment across 149 countries. Scale 0 to 1.	0.638 (123/149)
Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index (2019)	The state of gender equality across 129 countries. The Index features 51 indicators across 14 of the 17 SDGs and 51 targets linked to gender issues. The Index ranks countries on a score of 0 to 100 (Excellent: 90 and above; Good: 80-89; Fair: 70-79; Poor: 60-69; Very poor: 59 and below).	64.8 (Poor) (72/129)

As is the case in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the national gender machinery is spearheaded by a quasi-government organization that does not quite reach the Ministry status and does not have executive power. The CWFA has multiple roles, ranging from overseeing GoT's compliance with CEDAW and the SDGs, capacity-building of GoT staff on gender mainstreaming to managing domestic violence shelters and hotlines, and administering grants to female entrepreneurs (including start-ups), and abandoned wives of labor migrants.

By law, equal rights are granted to men and women, however, women's access is *de facto* and constrained by customary norms, gender stereotypes, and patriarchal practices that the existing legislation does not take into account. These discriminatory social beliefs and norms regarding roles and responsibilities of women, including domestic task distribution inequalities, women's generally lower level of education (especially vocational education), lack of professional qualifications and absence of childcare place women in a weak employment position. Stereotypes of women as home-makers conflict with images of women as political leaders, which are typically seen as men's roles. In 2017, women constituted 21.1 percent of the members of the Majlis-i Milli (upper house) of the Majlis-i Oli, a slight increase from 17.5 percent in 2015.<sup>199</sup> Equally low is the percentage of women in the civil service at 22.5 percent, with only 18.7 percent of them holding managerial positions.<sup>200</sup> Women's decision-making power at the family level has decreased since 2012. The 2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) survey showed that the ratio of married women who participate in three specific household decisions either alone or jointly with their husband was 33 percent; this is in comparison to 2012, when that percentage was 43.3 percent. Similarly, in 2017, 49 percent of married women reported that they participate in none of the decisions, compared with 34.2 percent in 2012.

#### 4.1 People with Disabilities

The GoT's approach to disability is a medical one, as is in the entire region. The Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Tajikistan applies to individuals with physical or mental disabilities, including sensory and developmental disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and provision of other state services, but public and private institutions generally do not commit resources to implement the law. Tajikistan has scheduled ratification of the Convention on Rights of the People with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2021.

The law requires government buildings, schools, hospitals, and transportation, including air travel, to be accessible to persons with disabilities; however, these provisions are not enforced. Many children with disabilities are not able to attend schools because doctors do not deem them "medically fit." Those who are considered medically unfit are allowed to attend special state-run schools established specifically for persons with physical and mental disabilities. The government charges the Tajik Commission on Fulfillment of International Human Rights, the Society of People with Disability, and local and regional governmental structures with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, the funding is limited, and facilities are in poor condition.

<sup>199</sup> The Government of Tajikistan, Sixth Periodic Review submitted to CEDAW under Article 18, 2017.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2 LGBTI

Homophobia and stigmatization of the LGBTI population are extremely high in Tajikistan. Police abuse, extortion, fear for safety and security, and society and family pressure force LGBTI individuals to hide their sexual orientation and gender identity. Hate crimes against members of the LGBTI community reportedly go unaddressed. LGBTI individuals report discrimination from health-care providers. LGBTI advocacy and health groups, who do not exist openly, and are sometimes presented as HIV service organizations, report harassment from government officials and clergy, as well as obstruction of their activities by national security bodies. As a result, there is a lack of trust in NGO staff and health care workers by the LGBTI community. Same-sex relations are not illegal, but there have been reports of LGBTI individuals being interrogated or harassed by the national security service. In 2017, international media outlets reported that the Interior Ministry General Prosecutor's Office had created a registry of hundreds of persons from the LGBTI community.

One group that is particularly underserved and discriminated against are men who have sex with men (MSM). Due to social stigma, they will often marry heterosexual women, and continue to have sex with men, often unprotected and at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. Frequently, in order to escape pressure and violence, MSM migrate to Russia. Article 125 of the Criminal Code (intentional HIV affecting) is used to intimidate MSM, and reportedly 33 cases on this basis have been prosecuted. The recent *National HIV Response Program 2017-2020* does not include MSM as a target treatment group, despite the fact that the last Government proposal to the Global Fund, prior to the development of the strategy, contained a reference to MSM.

## 4.3 Youth

Today, young people below 30 years of age comprise 70 percent of the population.<sup>201</sup> They also constitute a major part of the unemployed citizens in Tajikistan. The country's no education, employment, or training (NEET) rate is reportedly one of the highest among post-Soviet countries. In 2017, 30 percent of youth aged 15-24 had no job, were not studying towards a degree, and were not in professional training. The female NEET rate was nine times higher than the male rate.<sup>202</sup>

USAID, as well as other donors, recognize the importance of investing in youth for self-sustainability of Tajikistan. USAID has targeted youth in income generating opportunities, activities related to media and civil society strengthening, education, and health.

## 4.4 Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women is deeply ingrained in the culture and social norms of Tajikistan and has many forms, including DV, intimate partner violence, and early marriage. Most people believe that DV is a private matter to be settled within the concerned family. In 2017, 24 percent of women of ages 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence from the age of 15, compared to 19 percent in 2012.<sup>203</sup> Up to 97 percent of men and 64 percent of women between the ages 15 and 49 believe a husband is justified to beat his wife for reasons such as arguing or leaving the home without permission.<sup>204</sup> The state institutions often neglect survivors' needs for protection, services, and justice, exacerbating the situation. In spite of a few signs of progress, including the adoption of the Family Violence Law (2013) that led to increased public awareness on GBV and the establishment of the Gender-Sensitive Police Units and Temporary Victim Support Rooms in hospitals, the government's efforts to address this serious problem at large remain inadequate. The Law has several deficiencies, which include a lack of coordinated protection strategy; the victims needing increased protection after restraining orders are issued against their perpetrators; and lack of free legal aid and emergency shelters. The Law refers to NGOs as being responsible for providing shelters; however, funding deficiencies over the years—due to donors withdrawing their financial support and the state not providing funds—has resulted in many shelters closing, with about two or three shelters

---

<sup>201</sup> Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS*, 2012, <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-384.cfm>; Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS*, 2017 <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-521.cfm>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

being active at this time, in addition to eight rooms in city hospitals and maternity units across the country where female victims of domestic violence can stay up to three days (supported by the UN Population Fund [UNFPA]).<sup>205</sup> CWFA supports a domestic violence hotline “1313,” which offers counseling and referrals, but only operates 8:00 am to 5:00 pm daily. Every day, the hotline receives five to six calls.<sup>206</sup> Another serious concern is the lack of centralized, comprehensive, publicly accessible and transparent national statistics on domestic violence, disaggregated in a way which would allow for analysis of the prevalence of the problem.<sup>207</sup>

International donors have been working to address some of the gaps in addressing GBV. Several respondents mentioned the Prevention of Domestic Violence in Tajikistan project, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as an effective example of awareness raising on domestic violence. The project had displayed visible posters and banners throughout Dushanbe, with messages against DV. Other awareness-raising activities included educational videos, cartoons, and training for police, health professionals, and village leaders. The project also worked with the Tajik national Committee on Women and Family Affairs and government ministries to coordinate the efforts of the state and civil society to ensure effective application of the Family Violence law and its plan of action. It also supported several NGOs and two crisis centers offering psychosocial and legal assistance to victims of DV.<sup>208</sup> Another noteworthy project is Zindagii Shoista (Living with Dignity), supported by UKAid, which worked in rural areas in Tajikistan. This integrated approach, addressing the overlapping issues of poverty, patriarchy, and violence through a family focus, resulted in reduction of DV. The percentage of women who reported experiencing violence decreased from 64 percent to 33 percent, and the percentage of men who reported perpetrating violence decreased from 48 percent to 5 percent.<sup>209</sup>

## 5. FINDINGS BY SECTOR

This section presents gender and social inclusion findings in the sectors and subsectors in which USAID/CA is active in Tajikistan. They include: 1) Economic Growth (Agriculture [FtF], Trade and Markets, Energy, Water); 2) Democracy and Governance (Civil Society, Media, CVE, Countering Trafficking in Persons [CTIP]); 3) Basic Education and 4) Health (TB, HIV/AIDS [PEPFAR]).

---

<sup>205</sup> IPHR, *Tajikistan: Failure to Protect Women from Domestic Violence: Joint NGO submission to CEDAW ahead of 71st Session*. October 2018.

<sup>206</sup> Interview with CWFA, July 16, 2019.

<sup>207</sup> IPHR, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>208</sup> Switzerland Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, “Prevention of Domestic Violence in Tajikistan,” August, 4, 2019, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/state-economic-reforms/development-human-rights.html/content/dezaprospects/SDC/en/1999/7F00398/phase8>, last accessed August 5, 2019.

<sup>209</sup> International Relief, *Working with families to prevent violence against women and girls in Tajikistan: Evidence Brief*. 2018.

## 5.1 Economic Growth

### 5.1.1 Trade and Markets

The rate of poverty in Tajikistan has decreased from 81 percent in 1999 to 29.7 percent in 2017.<sup>210</sup> In 2018, labor participation rate was 45.6 percent for women and 73 percent for men,<sup>211</sup> with the gender pay gap of 33 percent.<sup>212</sup> Gender disparities in the labor market are partially attributed to the pervasive gender stereotypes and gendered social norms that view unpaid domestic and care work as a primary responsibility of women. The National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020 includes a strategic goal of supporting women's businesses via increasing women's competitiveness on the labor market.

#### *Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)*

Due to widespread corruption, geographical, bureaucratic, and financial obstacles, the environment in Tajikistan is not friendly to SME development and growth. Women's business, in particular, faces unique challenges. UNDP research of female entrepreneurs in rural Tajikistan found that their main obstacle is their own lack of self-esteem and confidence in their own business management skills. The women believed that an improvement in their self-confidence would have a greater impact on their business success than an external issue such as access to finance.<sup>213</sup> This is not to say, however, that lack of dedicated financing product is not an issue for women. Due to such scarcity, women-led businesses are 3.5 times more likely to borrow from family and friends.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, women's exposure to business opportunities and networks is lower than men's due to their low financial literacy and business skills, which means that most women lead micro-businesses. Forty-two (42) percent of women are self-employed and are increasingly looking at entrepreneurship for income generation.<sup>215</sup>

One of the most influential entities supporting women's entrepreneurship is the NABWT. This membership organization provides women and youth entrepreneurs with access to legal aid (on issues such as taxation, business registration, licensing, customs fees, etc.) and vocational courses. However, the vocational courses are all very traditional and along gender lines—including sewing curtains, hairdressing, hand embroidery, machine embroidery, and patchwork.<sup>216</sup> While for many women having these types of opportunities can be life-changing, they in fact perpetuate existing gender stereotypes and occupational segregation. NABWT is also engaged with lobbying for the advancement of interests of female entrepreneurs via strengthening their network and the promotion of their success stories in public. Every two years, NABWT organizes the nationwide competition “The best woman entrepreneur of the year,” where the winner is awarded the Farah (inspiration) Award.

There are several donor programs that support women in business. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD) Women in Business program promotes women's entrepreneurship through access to finance and know-how in order to stimulate business growth. The program provides up to \$8 million to partner financial institutions for on-lending to women-led businesses. EBRD offers risk-sharing and technical assistance, making the loans more accessible. In addition, the women have access to mentoring, entrepreneurship training courses, and know-how from local consultants and international experts to grow their businesses.<sup>217</sup>

USAID's regional Competitiveness, Trade and Jobs (CTJ) Activity works to increase competitiveness of horticulture and transport/logistics sectors. While both of these sectors have low participation of women-

---

<sup>210</sup> Closing Remarks by President Rahmon, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>211</sup> ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.

<sup>212</sup> OECD Eurasia, *Draft Background Note: Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia Better Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment*, 2019.

<sup>213</sup> UNDP Tajikistan, *Women Empowerment in Tajikistan – Stories of Change*, 2016.

<sup>214</sup> Elena Akhmedova. 2019. “EBRD Launches Women in Business Programme in Tajikistan.” European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). September 26, 2019. <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2017/EBRD-launches-Women-in-Business-programme-in-Tajikistan>. Last accessed August 5, 2019.

<sup>215</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>216</sup> “Vocational Courses.” 2018. NABWT. September 18, 2018. <http://nabwt.tj/vocational-courses/>. Last accessed August 6, 2019.

<sup>217</sup> EBRD, 2017 *op cit*.

owned businesses, the Activity offers trainings such as “Start your business” and “Expand your business” to female entrepreneurs in remote areas of Tajikistan.

### *Land Ownership and Rights*

The GoT owns all the land in Tajikistan; Tajik citizens have the right to land use. In 2017, 17.3 percent of women had joint or alone ownership of housing, compared with 17.1 percent in 2012. Also in 2012, 12.8 percent of women owned land jointly or alone.<sup>218</sup> In 2017, women owned 8.8 percent of *dehkan* farm lands.<sup>219</sup> The sources report about 19.2 percent of female-headed *dehkan* farms in 2017, compared with 7.8 percent in 2012.<sup>220</sup>

USAID’s FtF Land Market Development Activity works in 12 districts and focuses on land policy and legal development, private sector capacity development to support a land market, simplification of land registration procedures, and expansion of knowledge of land use rights among rural government and citizens, especially female landholders. The Activity supports legal aid centers in all 12 districts which provide legal advice and assistance to farmers related to land, divorce, and inheritance-related inquiries. For example, for women whose husbands are migrants in Russia it is important to know that they need a marriage certificate to claim land rights, but people often do not have their marriages registered if they follow customary law.<sup>221</sup> Legal aid centers initially had all male lawyers; however, after hiring at least one female lawyer per center, the number of female clients increased from 40 percent to 56 percent. Network of *tashabbuskors* (volunteers)—approximately 30 percent of whom are female—are used to share information within the community about legal rights and to refer clients to legal aid centers.<sup>222</sup>

### *Agriculture*

Women’s representation in GoT leadership posts increased in 2007 and 2014—at the Ministry of Agriculture, from none in 2007 to 20 percent in 2014, and at the Agency for Land Management, from none to 24 percent.<sup>223</sup> However, these percentages are still very low. Women make up 75 percent of agricultural workers. As agriculture workers, women and youth are engaged mostly informally. In Khatlon province, they usually work as small-scale producers and processors. Their access to high-quality agricultural training is limited, as is the quality and volume of their agricultural products. In fact most products produced by women and youth are for household consumption, selling the surplus in local markets. These sales do not generate enough income for most households.<sup>224</sup>

Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity in Tajikistan (ACAT) works on the economic viability of the agriculture sector with a focus on horticulture and dairy value chains. The activity provides assistance to agricultural associations, cooperatives, market integrators, and SMEs. It has developed a Gender and Youth Inclusion strategy to facilitate women’s and youth’s greater engagement in these two value chains.

#### 5.1.2 Energy

Energy plays a crucial role in the development process and contributes to poverty eradication, social inclusion, gender equality, and sustainable development. It is also a key input to industrial and agricultural production and to the majority of consumer services. Energy shortages have a negative impact on businesses, especially small-sized and home-based enterprises where women are commonly engaged. Those households without a reliable supply of energy in the winter, burn solid fuels which represent a major health risk factor, particularly affecting women and children. Gendered division of labor means that men are responsible for purchasing, while women and children collect biomass fuel.

Women’s participation in the energy sector is insufficient. For instance, the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources presently has no female managers.<sup>225</sup> The Open Joint Stock Holding Company (OJSC) Barki

---

<sup>218</sup> DHS, 2012 *op cit.*

<sup>219</sup> “Gender indicators in Dehkan Farms in Russian,” Statistics Agency under the President of RT, 2018.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> Interview with FtF Land Market Activity, July 16, 2019.

<sup>222</sup> Focus Group Discussion with IPs, July 15, 2019.

<sup>223</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Tajikistan: Country Gender Assessment*, 2016: 14, 15.

<sup>224</sup> USAID, *Gender and Youth Inclusion Strategy: USAID Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity in Tajikistan*, August 2018.

<sup>225</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2016 *op cit.*



Tojik (national power company) operates 26 branches and affiliates, including hydroelectric power plants, thermal power plants, more than 60,000 km of transmission lines, as well as power distribution enterprises. Barki Tojik is one of the largest employers in the country, with a workforce of 14,000 employees, including 1,329 women, which constitutes nearly 10 percent of the workforce.<sup>226</sup> Tajik Energy Institute (TEI) serves as the main educational institution in the country for training scientific and technical cadres for the power sector. The total number of TEI's employees and Faculty and Staff is 122, including 16.4 percent women (2018). The number of TEI students is 2208, with only 3.6 percent female.<sup>227</sup>

Donors have been supporting activities to bring attention to this gap. In December 2018, UNDP conducted the first national workshop on strengthening opportunities for women in the energy sector. Participants included government institutions (Ministry of Energy and Water Resources and Committee of Women and Family Affairs), as well as private sector, donors, financial institutions, and international organizations. Women, who are active in renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors shared their experiences, successes, and challenges. Furthermore, the best practices in these two sectors were shared during the workshop.<sup>228</sup>

### 5.1.3 Water

Almost all urban households (94.1 percent), but less than half of rural households (45.2 percent) have access to drinking water on their premises.<sup>229</sup> There is a need to address gaps in sustainable use and management of water resources through strengthening partnerships at the national, regional and international levels. Access to water provides greater access to economic resources and livelihoods for rural and marginalized women. Women lack the capacity and opportunities to participate in the local governance, within local water basin councils and local government, as well as national and regional decision-making bodies. Gender-sensitive health policies also rely on safer sanitation and water for domestic use. There are a number of opportunities to empower women in the water sector for decision-making about the use of water resources in irrigation; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and IWRM methodology.

In June 2018, the Women Water Forum was held in Dushanbe, as part of the “Water for Sustainable Development” Conference. The Forum brought together the GoT, including the Committee of Women and Family Affairs, donors including USAID, and UN agencies, as well as international, regional, and national NGOs and water experts to discuss the importance of women’s participation in the provision, management and safeguarding of water and their inclusion in water governance at all levels. In Tajikistan, at the policy level, the Gender Working Group was established within the Tajikistan Water Supply and Sanitation Network. A Gender Roadmap was developed to show the ways in which the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Water Sector Reform Program (2015-2025) can be made gender sensitive and inclusive of women. At the community/grass-roots level, it is important to consult women, since no one can speak on their behalf.<sup>230</sup>

USAID’s contribution to addressing gender issues in the water sector has been primarily through the regional Smart Waters Project, which facilitates policy-level water management discussion and on-the-ground opportunities for key water managers, students, researchers, policymakers, and end users to network and share information.

## 5.2 Democracy and Governance

### 5.2.1 Civil Society

The GoT holds tight control over the country’s 2,773 registered public associations; the Law on Public Associations introduced in 2015 requires all NGOs that receive foreign funding to report to the Ministry

---

<sup>226</sup> Central Asia Region Energy Links Project, *Gender Assessment*, 2018.

<sup>227</sup> IWPR, *The Situation of the Civil Society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan*, 2018.

<sup>228</sup> “UNDP to Promote Creating Opportunities for Women in Energy Sector in Tajikistan.” 2018. UNDP <http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/12/undp-to-promote-creating-opportunities-for-women-in-energy-secto.html>. Last accessed August 6, 2019.

<sup>229</sup> UNDP, *National Report*, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>230</sup> Women Water Forum, *Bridging Voices to Actions: Synthesis Report*, June 19, 2018.

of Justice, although this is not widely enforced.<sup>231</sup> Organizations working on issues of free information, religion and LGBTI issues are under particular pressure and many have ceased to exist. The 2018 study of civil society in the region identified the following main challenges for the development of CSOs in Tajikistan: insufficient financial resources; physical threats against individual activists; rigid legal regulation; reduced public confidence in the civil society sector; and state intervention in the NGO activities.<sup>232</sup> USAID is currently supporting the Enhanced Enabling Environment Project, which aims to strengthen the ability of CSOs and the GoT to prevent the deterioration of and advance improvements to the enabling environment, while promoting local ownership and public participation.

### 5.2.2 Media

Tajikistan has limited free media space, with few independent media outlets under regular state scrutiny. The recent analysis suggests that media at large is more aimed at promoting the implementation of the government policy since it is not interested in covering CSOs' activities, especially human rights issues. Most likely, the media and civil society sector still do not realize the power and benefit of their partnership towards bringing social changes in society.<sup>233</sup> Most media reporting is not gender-sensitive and often journalists are reluctant to write about the LGBTI community.

Social media has proven itself to be a powerful tool for affecting change in Tajikistan, as in the rest of the region. A successful example of the power of social media is Tajik Mama Group, a Facebook community with 31,000 young female members, founded by women in 2012. This community runs their own social projects and has several advocacy victories. Perhaps their most public victory has been persuading the city of Dushanbe to take measures against street harassment. City authorities set up a working group to address women's complaints about street harassment. Those who are caught harassing women on the street are punished by menial labor.

USAID supports the media through the regional Access to Information (ATI) project, which is scheduled to end in September 2019. It will be replaced by another regional activity, Central Asia Media Project (CAMP). Both ATI and CAMP are focused on building capacity of local media. ATI provided grants to the media to report on social issues. One of the grants was awarded to Asia+, a local news outlet, which produced more than fifty pieces of women's empowerment content around the campaign "I'm a woman and I am capable," which featured women doing the same job as men. The campaign was able to secure a local sponsor and continue beyond the ATI grant.<sup>234</sup> Among other activities, CAMP will support developing new media, by focusing on female and male social media creators.

### 5.2.3 Countering Violent Extremism

According to some media outlets, the countries of Central Asia supplied between 2,600 and 4,000 foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq. Though it is difficult to determine the precise number of women who have travelled with their husbands, roughly 20 percent of those leaving these two regions for the conflict zones were women.<sup>235</sup> However, there has been very limited research in the region on how to connect national security actors, gender machinery, and female peace activists. More work is needed to determine how to strengthen women's participation and rights protection, and on identifying the role of women's organizations on all CVE efforts. Meanwhile, in Tajikistan's National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (2016-2020), a gender dimension is already an explicit element. But still, specialized analytical and operational expertise and preventative strategies remain largely gender blind. A combination of economic dependency, traditional family roles, and community expectations make women support and follow their husbands' lead. For instance, many female family members of those who had left said that some of the wives were told that they were migrating to Turkey to work, and only realized later

---

<sup>231</sup> "Tajikistan Country Report." Nations in Transit 2018. Freedom House. October 2, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/tajikistan>. Last accessed August 7, 2019.

<sup>232</sup> IWPR, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>234</sup> Interview with Internews, July 11, 2019.

<sup>235</sup> Mohammed S. Elshimi, Raffaello Pantucci, Sarah Lain, and Nadine L. Salman. April 2018. "Understanding the Factors Contributing to Radicalisation Among Central Asian Labour Migrants in Russia." Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.



that they were already in Syria. This can partially be explained by women’s lack of access to information, especially about international developments, and men’s control over family resources and decision-making.

#### 5.2.4 Countering Trafficking in Persons

Tajikistan adopted its Law on Human Trafficking and Services to Victims of Trafficking in 2014, thereby beginning work on this issue at the national, regional, and local level. Tajikistan is a source country for labor migrants, who mainly travel to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. It has the highest share of migrants (over 10 percent of the total population has emigrated elsewhere),<sup>236</sup> correlated to a lack of employment opportunities and labor surplus in rural areas and constraints in accessing agricultural inputs.

In 2017, there were 1.13 million labor migrants from Tajikistan in Russia.<sup>237</sup> Due to insufficient knowledge of host countries’ languages, legislation, and their own rights, migrants are often vulnerable to human trafficking, including sexual exploitation. Tajikistan’s large outflux of citizens for labor migration led to women taking on non-traditional gender roles of heads of households, although the perception of their agency did not change. Acknowledging this challenge, USAID’s Partnership for Innovations project has been supporting five pilot projects to increase access to social and economic resources by the abandoned wives of migrants in Tajikistan. The projects helped women starting self-help groups and small home-based businesses such as baking and sewing, making changes in the lives of 200 families. The second round with 10 projects is currently in the planning stage.<sup>238</sup>

Remittances are an important and stable source of income for many households in Tajikistan and significantly contribute to Tajikistan’s gross domestic product (GDP), which in 2017 was 33.3 percent.<sup>239</sup> A correlation is seen between increases in remittances and reductions of poverty levels and improvements in food security and nutrition, as measured in terms of prevalence of undernourishment.<sup>240</sup>

Trafficking victim profiles have changed—in the past, more women and children have been trafficked while today more men are subject to labor trafficking in agriculture, construction, and markets outside the country.<sup>241</sup>

### 5.3 Education

Women and girls face limited access to education and employment opportunities and growing religious conservatism which is reinforcing traditional gender roles. In primary education, the number of girls starts declining around grade six, but the majority drop out after grade 9, until which education is mandatory. Some parts of the country are more restrictive about girls’ education than others. Commonly, fathers and brothers put pressure on girls not to attend school. The investment in girls’ education is often not considered worthwhile since most girls marry young. A high workload during seasonal fieldwork, transportation costs, and safety of the roads also impact girls’ dropout rates. Similarly, children from poor households, children in institutions, and children in rural/remote areas are also at risk of dropping out. Eighty (80) percent of the female population and 79 percent of the male population have at least some secondary education.<sup>242</sup> Young men are more likely than young women to have post-secondary education—25 percent vs. 13 percent, respectively.<sup>243</sup> Accessing higher education is particularly challenging for rural young women since these institutions are usually in urban center and do not always have a sufficient number of female dormitories for female students. Cultural values that prohibit women traveling from home without their families also create a challenge.

There is a Presidential quota system for girls from remote areas to enter higher education (since 2006, the program has been open to the boys). In 2013, there were 1,200 program participants, more than half

---

<sup>236</sup> FAO, *Publication Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2018*. 2018.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Interview with ARGO, July 5, 2019.

<sup>239</sup> UNDP, *National Report, 2018 op cit*.

<sup>240</sup> The cumulative probability of habitual consumption levels for this average individual that are below the lower bound of the range of normal requirements is taken as an estimate of the PoU. FAO, 2017b, Annex 1.1 and 1.2.

<sup>241</sup> United States Department of State. 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report Tajikistan. 2019. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/tajikistan/>.

<sup>242</sup> DHS, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

of which were female. However, sex segregation in academic subjects is not addressed by the quota. Most women in secondary vocational institutions study either health or education, while men are enrolled in technical subjects, including agriculture. To start addressing gender segregation in vocational education, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is currently supporting a program for women in non-traditional fields, such as construction, energy, welding, and jewelry making. The target is 2,260 women enrolled (so far, there are 700). Women are provided a stipend during the program and are linked with employment upon completion. ADB is also renovating dormitories within select vocational institutions so that they can house women.<sup>244</sup> The quota system does not solve the problem of inadequate dorms, continued family pressure on women to drop out and get married, and low quality of primary rural education that fails to prepare young women for higher education, leading them to drop out.<sup>245</sup>

USAID supports basic education in Tajikistan with its Read with Me project, which is focused on improving reading outcomes for grades 1-4. Targeted interventions in basic education programs that raise awareness about gender norms and expectations, and work with parents, teachers, and students, may allow young men and women to pursue alternative fields of study in secondary and higher education.

## 5.4 Health

### 5.4.1 Tuberculosis

Despite the highest annual regional rates of decline in TB between 2007 and 2017 in Tajikistan (-7.4 percent), alarmingly high rates of Multi-Drug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB) represent one of the main challenges for TB prevention and care in the country.<sup>246</sup> Labor migrants and their families are a particularly vulnerable group for contracting TB. They often lack access to nutritious food, TB education and awareness, and socio-economic services.

Commonly, children will contract TB from their mothers who take care of them at home. Women are often prevented from accessing health care services due to stigmatization, though that does not appear to be the case for men. However, women are continuing with the TB treatment longer, where men, pressured by financial responsibilities, often leave the treatment early and go to work abroad as soon as they feel slightly better. In the past, men were 75 percent of TB-infected population, but these days, the sex ratio is approximately 55 percent men and 45 percent women.<sup>247</sup>

USAID's regional TB Control project works to ensure more equitable access to comprehensive and appropriate TB diagnostic and treatment services for vulnerable populations. A part of this work includes addressing TB stigma, which is gender based. Women, who usually do not have any decision-making power, are frequently sent away from their homes by their family members if they contract TB. They are expected not to return until after they get better, leaving their children and responsibilities behind. Girls who have had TB may have problems getting married in the future.<sup>248</sup>

### 5.4.2 HIV/AIDS

In spite of declining rates of new HIV infections in Tajikistan, new infections still continue to outpace antiretroviral therapy (ART) enrollment in Tajikistan. HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate in Tajikistan is 0.3 percent.<sup>249</sup> In 2017, over 90 percent of adults in Tajikistan were adhering to HIV treatment after 12 months of initiating it.<sup>250</sup> Due to stigma related to HIV, male migrants do not tell their wives about positive diagnosis which results in women and children getting HIV.<sup>251</sup>

HIV is a rather concentrated epidemic, *i.e.*, prevailing among people who inject drugs (PWID), mother to child transmission, and through sexual transmission. In addition, there are very concerning recent reports

---

<sup>244</sup> Interview with ADB, July 17, 2019.

<sup>245</sup> FAO, *National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Tajikistan*, 2016.

<sup>246</sup> Avert, "HIV and AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview," January 18, 2019, <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>, Last accessed August 7, 2019.

<sup>247</sup> FGD with IPs, July 15, 2019.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> "Tajikistan." n.d. World Data Atlas. Knoema. <https://knoema.com/atlas/Tajikistan>.

<sup>250</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>251</sup> For example, see BBC article about women living with HIV in Tajikistan: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-39771549>.

of children who contracted HIV in medical facilities as their parents are HIV negative. In injecting circles, there is gender-based hierarchy, and the status of women is lower than men. Men use the syringe first, followed by women, who are also responsible for making money for a dose (usually through prostitution).<sup>252</sup>

HIV testing is legally required for couples before they get married. Admission to some secondary vocational and higher educational institutions is conditional on HIV testing. Government decrees (2004, 2018) prohibit HIV+ people from pursuing a medical degree, adopting a child, or being a legal guardian. Women with HIV engaged in prostitution face discrimination and violence and are denied access to HIV prevention services. HIV/AIDS transmission is criminalized under the Criminal Code, Art. 125. According to the country progress report on HIV/AIDS in Tajikistan, 2.0 percent of surveyed young people (aged 15-24) had sex before the age of 15, while data on knowledge of HIV prevention among young women (aged 15-24) are limited to 13.8 percent.<sup>253</sup>

Through its HIV Flagship Activity, USAID provides HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care services to people living with HIV, with key populations being PWID, their injecting and sexual partners, and MSM. The HIV React Project is focused on making dealing with HIV easier for prisoners and ex-prisoners, while TB Control Program supports TB diagnostic and treatment services for people living with HIV.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to these country-specific recommendations, the main report contains additional recommendations applicable to all country offices. It should be noted that donor coordination is beneficial in accomplishing many of the recommendations below.

### **Non-Sector Specific**

- Closely coordinate with the relevant donor organizations and State Agency on Statistics about developing new National Agency on Statistics Strategy inclusive of gender and social inclusion dimensions.
- Support the Government in adoption and implementation of: 1) comprehensive multi-stakeholder strategy to promote gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes, and 2) gender-sensitive national communications strategy (also CEDAW Committee Recommendations).
- Consider CWFA as one of the key USAID/Tajikistan Country office's partners in the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion. Given the Committee's multiple roles and work across sectors, it is a good entry point for providing support across sectors and themes—entrepreneurship, GBV, migration, data collection, etc.
- Support local administration, community-based organizations, and communities in integrating gender perspectives in development and implementation of local development plans.
- Support community-level interventions that promote changes in gender roles and responsibilities. An entry point for this type of intervention is the fact that many Tajik women are already heads of households, due to their husbands working abroad. This dynamic challenges existing interpretations of gender roles, and it will be important to present it as a positive change that contributes to the entire family's wellbeing.
- Use soft advocacy methods to address LGBTI issues with the government and international organizations, for example, through encouraging inclusion of UN recommendations about LGBTI issues in national action plans.

### **Economic Growth**

#### **Trade and Markets**

- Support non-traditional livelihood opportunities for the women that are gender transformative (IT specialists, mechanics, welders, bloggers, etc.).
- Work with both male and female community leaders, groups, and committees on promoting gender behavioral change to allow for greater participation of men in domestic and care

---

<sup>252</sup> Interview with USAID health team, July 15, 2019.

<sup>253</sup> Avert, 2019 *op cit*.

responsibilities, which would enable women to have time to access agriculture training, technical assistance, and other income-generating activities.

- Get involved in addressing occupational segregation through cooperation with the NDS Steering Committee and its sub-working groups (the issue is included in the agenda of the Steering committee).
- Support women's NGOs and organizations (e.g., NABWT) to expand their vocational courses to include non-traditional offerings to women. Building capacity of these organizations will make them more sustainable.
- Work with higher education and vocational institutions to recruit young women to study non-traditional female fields (STEM, agriculture, IWRM). This approach can contain multiple activities and can be accomplished via many projects and sectors.
- Operational: Re-instate USAID/Tajikistan office's EG staff and IPs annual training on FtF's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).

### **Land Rights and Ownership**

- Continue providing guidance to the Inter-Ministerial Land Working Group on gender-sensitive legislation.
- Continue supporting the Ministry of Education as it rolls out courses on women's right to land (these courses have been piloted in Khatlon in grade 10 and are supposed to be available throughout the country).
- Continue awareness-raising among the general public and women on the land rights, benefits, and how to practically use them, including tailored public outreach for rural women about agriculture, land rights, and sharing success stories of women heads of *dehkan* farms. Outreach to rural women should be tailored and responsive to their needs, which may mean the newspaper in Tajik, rather than social media.
- Support media and education awareness raising campaigns that combat customary law which prevents women from inheriting movable and immovable assets.
- In coordination with other donors working on land reform, continue supporting women's land rights through provision of legal aid and awareness raising.

### **Energy**

- Identify select higher education and vocational institutions to help them develop strategies for recruitment of women into STEM fields of study. Strategies may include scholarships, awards for women and vulnerable groups, assistance with transportation and living costs, and gender-stereotype breaking/awareness-raising targeting their parents and families, etc.
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at Barki Tojik. An example of a very successful USG program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities. Some strategies resulting in increased participation of women in the sector, under this program, could include "Bring your daughter to work day," supporting Youth energy clubs in school, providing mentorship opportunities, and offering STEM scholarships to women and vulnerable groups, linked with internship and employment opportunities at Barki Tojik.
- Continue supporting events, conferences, awards, and networking opportunities that promote women's visibility in the power sector.

### **Water**

- Join Gender Working Group within the Tajikistan Water Supply and Sanitation Network in order to learn, share information, and coordinate with other donors and the GoT for gender issues in the water sector.
- Support a study of women in IWRM across the country to identify challenges, opportunities, best practices, and lessons learned in the context of Tajikistan.

## **Democracy and Governance**

### **Civil Society**

- Engage with LGBTI organizations on their own terms while respecting their confidentiality and understanding high levels of risks.
- Build capacity of DPOs.
- Conduct studies to explore pulling and pushing factors engaging young Tajik men and women in radical movements.
- Support youth CSOs and online media platforms to foster dialogue, critical thinking, and discussions on violent extremism amongst youth.
- Foster youth activism through capacity building and networking within the country and region.
- Support the GoT to ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

### **Media**

- Support development and sustainability of social media channels that promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes and harmful norms. Examples of such movements include the *Nemolchi* Campaign in Central Asia, and Tajik Mama Facebook community in Tajikistan.
- Support development and dissemination of information on gender equality, human rights, LGBTI communities, people with disabilities, etc. in the Tajik language.
- Support capacity-building of women and people with disabilities in social media and journalism via opportunities to participate in regional and international conferences and events, relevant trainings, etc.

### **Education**

- Undertake a gender analysis of all textbooks, curricula, and teaching materials, including at the university level, and revise them to remove discriminatory gender stereotypes.
- Conduct a series of trainings for authors and illustrators of school textbooks.
- Support a series of gender trainings for teaching personnel at all levels of education and integrate mandatory modules on women's rights and gender equality education into school curricula.
- Support trainings for teachers that foster zero-tolerance of violence against children; encourage teachers to focus on positive aspects of students' behavior and achievements as alternative to the corporal punishment; and raise teachers' awareness of consequences of corporal punishment, including worsening students' performance, school dislike, asocial behavior at a later age, as well as mental and health side-effects.

### **Health**

#### **TB**

- Address stigmatization and discrimination of people with TB through capacity-building and awareness raising of health sector staff and the general public.
- Support the social partnership between civil society organizations and the GoT for TB prevention and treatment efforts.
- Conduct a survey on the population's access to TB services from a gender lens.

#### **HIV**

- Support the social partnership between CSOs and the GoT for HIV prevention and treatment efforts.
- Continue supporting awareness raising and knowledge dissemination about HIV transmission, especially among young people and adolescents.
- Continue supporting awareness raising and education on preventing stigmatization of people with HIV among health sector staff and general public.
- Support gender-sensitive awareness raising campaigns to change public perceptions about ways to contract TB and HIV, and disability as part of human diversity, rather than a disease to be cured.
- Lobby for decriminalization of intentional HIV transmission (Criminal Code, Article 125).

## **Annex I: Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis Domains**

### **I. Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices that influence the context in which men and women act and make decisions:**

Tajikistan has a solid gender legal and policy framework, as well numerous pieces of legislation addressing health, CVE, trafficking, youth, and social protection, including:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, (Article 17) (2013)
- Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women” (2005)
- Law on the Prevention of Violence in the Family (2013) and subsequent State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014-2023
- Law on combatting trafficking in human beings (2010), and the National Action Plan on Prevention of Human Trafficking for the period of 2016-2018
- The National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2011-2020
- The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030 in line with SDGs
- National Strategy on Youth Policy for the period until 2020
- State program for the education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2017-2022
- Law on Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (2015)
- Program on Reproductive Health of Women for the period 2015-2020
- The National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2010-2020
- The National Program to Combat the HIV Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2017-2020
- The State program for the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV for 2017-2020
- The National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for 2016-2020
- The Labor Code, 2016 (prohibits discrimination based on sex in labor relations). There is only one general article in the Criminal Code devoted to discrimination, which covers discrimination based on sex, age, nationality, or religion. There is no legislation for sexual harassment in the workplace.

Tajikistan has acceded to a number of international conventions, including the CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of Child, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, ILO Forced Labor Convention, and the ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor.

As is the case in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the national gender machinery is spearheaded by a quasi-government organization that does not quite reach the Ministry status and that does not have executive power. The CVFA has multiple roles, ranging from overseeing GoT’s compliance with CEDAW and the SDGs, capacity-building of GoT staff on gender mainstreaming to managing DV shelters and hotlines, and administering grants to female entrepreneurs (including start-ups) and abandoned wives of labor migrants.

### ***People with Disabilities***

The GoT’s approach to disability is a medical one, as is in the entire region. The Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Tajikistan applies to individuals with physical or mental disabilities, including sensory and developmental disabilities. The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and provision of other state services, but public and private institutions generally do not commit resources to implement the law. Tajikistan has scheduled ratification of the CRPD in 2021.

The law requires government buildings, schools, hospitals, and transportation, including air travel, to be accessible to persons with disabilities; however, these provisions are not enforced. Many children with disabilities are not able to attend schools because doctors do not deem them “medically fit.” Those who are considered medically unfit are allowed to attend special state-run schools established specifically for persons with physical and mental disabilities. The government charges the Tajik Commission on Fulfillment

of International Human Rights, the Society of People with disability, and local and regional governmental structures with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, the funding is limited, and facilities are in poor condition.

## **LGBTI**

Same-sex relations are not illegal, but there have been reports of LGBTI individuals being interrogated or harassed by the national security service. In 2017, international media outlets reported that the Interior Ministry General Prosecutor's Office had created a registry of hundreds of persons from the LGBTI community.

Article 125 of the Criminal Code (intentional HIV affecting) is used to intimidate MSM, and reportedly 33 cases on this basis have been prosecuted. Recent *National HIV Response Program 2017-2020* does not include MSM as a target treatment group, despite the fact that the last Government proposal to the Global Fund, prior to the development of the strategy, contained a reference to MSM.

## **Gender-Based Violence**

Violence against women is deeply ingrained in the culture and social norms of Tajikistan and has many forms, including DV, intimate partner violence, and early marriage. The state institutions often neglect survivors' needs for protection, services, and justice, exacerbating the situation. In spite of a few signs of progress, including the adoption of the Family Violence Law (2013,) that led to increased public awareness on GBV and the establishment of the Gender-Sensitive Police Units and Temporary Victim Support Rooms in hospitals, government's efforts to address this serious problem at large remain inadequate. The Law has several deficiencies, which include a lack of coordinated protection strategy; the victims needing increased protection after restraining orders are issued against their perpetrators; and lack of free legal aid and emergency shelters. The Law refers to NGOs as being responsible for providing shelters. However, funding deficiencies over the years—due to donors withdrawing their financial support and the state not providing any—has resulted in many shelters closing; only two or three shelters are active at this time in addition to eight rooms in city hospitals and maternity units across the country where female victims of DV can stay up to three days (supported by the UNFPA). CWFA supports a DV hotline "1313," which offers counseling and referrals, but only operates 8 am to 5 pm daily. Every day, the hotline receives five to six calls. Another serious concern is the lack of centralized, comprehensive, publicly accessible, and transparent national statistics on DV, disaggregated in a way which would allow for analysis of the prevalence of the problem.

## **II. Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

Discriminatory social beliefs and norms regarding roles and responsibilities of women, including domestic task distribution inequalities, women's generally lower level of education (especially vocational education), lack of professional qualifications, and absence of childcare place women in a weak employment position. Stereotypes of women as home-makers conflict with images of women as political leaders, which are typically seen as men's roles.

Most people believe that DV is a private matter to be settled within the concerned family. In 2017, 24 percent of women of ages 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence from the age of 15, compared to 19 percent in 2012. Up to 97 percent of men and 64 percent of women between the ages 15 and 49 believe a husband is justified to beat his wife for reasons such as arguing or leaving the home without permission.

Women and girls face limited access to education and employment opportunities and growing religious conservatism which is reinforcing traditional gender roles. In primary education, the number of girls starts declining around grade six, but the majority drop out after grade 9, until which education is mandatory. Some parts of the country are more restrictive about girls' education than others. Commonly, fathers and brothers put pressure on girls not to attend school. The investment in girls' education is often not considered worthwhile since most girls marry young. A high workload during seasonal fieldwork, transportation costs, and safety of the roads also impact girls' dropout rates. Similarly, children from poor households, children in institutions and in rural/remote areas are also at risk of dropping out. Eighty (80) percent of the female population and 79 percent of the male population have at least some secondary

education. Young men are more likely than young women to have post-secondary education—25 percent vs. 13 percent. Accessing higher and vocational education is particularly challenging for rural young women since these institutions are usually in urban center and do not always have a sufficient number of female dormitories for female students. Cultural values that prohibit women traveling from home without her family is also a challenge.

Homophobia and stigmatization of the LGBTI population are extremely high in Tajikistan. Police abuse, extortion, fear for safety and security, and society and family pressure force LGBTI individuals to hide their sexual orientation and gender identity. Hate crimes against members of the LGBTI community reportedly go unaddressed. LGBTI individuals report discrimination from health-care providers. One group that is particularly underserved and discriminated against are MSM. Due to social stigma, they will often marry heterosexual women, and continue to have sex with men, often unprotected and at risk of STIs and HIV. Frequently, in order to escape pressure and violence, MSM migrate to Russia.

Cultural beliefs and stigmatization also surround people with disabilities, and people with HIV and TB. Commonly, children will contract TB from their mothers who take care of them at home. Women are often prevented from accessing health care services due to stigmatization while that does not appear to be the case for men. However, women are continuing with the TB treatment longer, where men, pressured by financial responsibilities, often leave the treatment early and go to work abroad as soon as they feel slightly better. Women, who usually do not have any decision-making power, are frequently sent away from their homes by their family members if they contract TB. They are expected not to return until after they get better, leaving their children and responsibilities behind. Girls who have had TB may have problems getting married in the future.

### **III. Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

In regard to energy, the households without a reliable supply of energy in the winter burn solid fuels which represent a major health risk factor, particularly affecting women and children. Gendered division of labor means that men are responsible for purchasing, women and children are collecting biomass fuel.

In migration, a combination of economic dependency, traditional family roles, and community expectations make women support and follow their husbands' lead when they decide to join terrorist groups. For instance, many female members of those who had left said that some of the wives were told that they were migrating to Turkey to work, and only later realized that they were already in Syria. This can partially be explained by women's lack of access to information, especially about international developments, and men's control over family resources and decision-making.

### **IV. Access to and Control over Assets and Resources**

In 2018, women's labor participation rate was 45.6 percent, compared to 73 percent for men, with the gender pay gap of 33 percent. Gender disparities in the labor market are partially attributed to the pervasive gender stereotypes and gendered social norms that view unpaid domestic and care work as a primary responsibility of women. In addition, the youth constitute a major part of the unemployed citizens in Tajikistan. The country's NEET rate is reportedly one of the highest among post-Soviet countries. In 2017, 30 percent of youth aged 15-24 had no job, were not studying towards a degree, and were not in professional training. The female NEET rate was nine times higher than the male rate.

Women are underrepresented in the SME sector. UNDP research of female entrepreneurs in rural Tajikistan found that their main obstacle is their own lack of self-esteem and confidence in their own business management skills. The women believed that an improvement in their self-confidence would have a great impact on their business success than an external issue such as access to finance. This is not to say, however, that lack of dedicated financing product is not an issue for women. Due to such scarcity, women-led businesses are 3.5 times more likely to borrow from family and friends. Furthermore, women's exposure to business opportunities and networks is lower than men's due to their low financial literacy and business skills, which means that most women lead micro-businesses. Forty-two (42) percent of women are self-employed and are increasingly looking at entrepreneurship for income generation.

There are fewer female than male landowners. In 2017, 17.3 percent of women had joint or alone ownership of housing, compared with 17.1 percent in 2012. Also in 2012, 12.8 percent of women owned



land jointly or alone. In 2017, women owned 8.8 percent of *dehkan* farmlands. The sources report about 19.2 percent of female-headed *dehkan* farms in 2017, compared with 7.8 percent in 2012.

## **V. Patterns of Power and Decision-Making**

In 2017, women constituted 21.1 percent of the members of the Majlis-i Milli (upper house) of the Majlis-i Oli, a slight increase from 17.5 percent in 2015. Equally low is the percentage of women in the civil service at 22.5 percent, with only 18.7 percent of them holding managerial positions. In the energy sector, women's participation is also low. For instance, the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources presently has no female managers. The OJSC Barki Tojik (national power company) operates 26 branches and affiliates, including hydroelectric power plants, thermal power plants, more than 60,000 km of transmission lines, as well as power distribution enterprises. Barki Tojik is one of the largest employers in the country, with a workforce of 14,000 employees, including 1,329 women, which constitutes nearly 10 percent of the workforce. TEI serves as the main educational institution in the country for training scientific and technical cadres for the power sector. The total number of TEI's employees and Faculty and Staff is 122, including 16.4 percent women (2018). A number of TEI students is 2208, including 3.6 percent female students. Women lack the capacity and opportunities to participate in local governance, within local water basin councils and local government, as well as national and regional decision-making bodies. There has been an increase women's representation in GoT leadership posts in 2007 and 2014—at the Ministry of Agriculture, from none in 2007 to 20 percent in 2014, and at the Agency for Land Management, from none to 24 percent.

Women's decision-making power at the family level has decreased since 2012. The 2017 DHS survey showed that the ratio of married women who participate in three specific household decisions either alone or jointly with their husband was 33 percent; this is in comparison to 2012, when that percentage was 43.3 percent. Similarly, in 2017, 49 percent of married women reported that they participate in none of the decisions, compared with 34.2 percent in 2012.

## Annex 2: Bibliography

- Akhmedova, Elena. 2019. "EBRD Launches Women in Business Programme in Tajikistan." European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). September 26, 2019. <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2017/EBRD-launches-Women-in-Business-programme-in-Tajikistan>.
- Asian Development Bank, *Tajikistan: Country Gender Assessment, 2016*: 14, 15.
- Avert, "HIV and AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview," January 18, 2019, <https://www.avert.org/hiv-and-aids-eastern-europe-central-asia-overview>.
- Closing Remarks by President Rahmon, National Development Forum and Development Forum, 2018.
- Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS, 2012*, <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-384.cfm>.
- Demographic and Health Survey, *Tajikistan Standard DHS, 2017* <https://dhsprogram.com/what-we-do/survey/survey-display-521.cfm>.
- FAO, National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Tajikistan, 2016.
- FAO, Publication Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2018. 2018.
- "Gender indicators in Dehkan Farms in Russian," Statistics Agency under the President of RT, 2018.
- The Government of Tajikistan, 6th periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- International Relief, *Working with families to prevent violence against women and girls in Tajikistan: Evidence Brief*. 2018.
- IPHR, *Tajikistan: Failure to Protect Women from Domestic Violence*, Joint NGO submission to CEDAW ahead of 71st Session. October 2018.
- IWPR, *The Situation of the Civil Society in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, 2018*.
- OECD Eurasia, *Draft Background Note: Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia Better Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment, 2019*.
- Switzerland Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, "Prevention of Domestic Violence in Tajikistan," August 4, 2019, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/state-economic-reforms/development-human-rights.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/1999/7F00398/phase8>.
- "Tajikistan." n.d. World Data Atlas. Knoema. <https://knoema.com/atlas/Tajikistan>.
- "Tajikistan Country Report." Nations in Transit 2018. Freedom House. October 2, 2018. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/tajikistan>.
- Elshimi, Mohammed S., Raffaello Pantucci, Sarah Lain, and Nadine L. Salman. 2018. "Understanding the Factors Contributing to Radicalisation Among Central Asian Labour Migrants in Russia." Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.
- ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.
- UNDP, *Human Development Indices and Indicators: Statistical Update, 2018*.
- UNDP, *National Report on Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, 2018*. <http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/library/poverty/national-report-on-implementation-of-strategic-documents-of-the-.html>
- UNDP Tajikistan, *Women Empowerment in Tajikistan – Stories of Change, 2016*.

“UNDP to Promote Creating Opportunities for Women in Energy Sector in Tajikistan.” 2018. UNDP <http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/12/undp-to-promote-creating-opportunities-for-women-in-energy-secto.html>.

United States Department of State. *2019 Trafficking in Persons Report Tajikistan*. 2019. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/tajikistan/>.

USAID, “About: Engendering Utilities,” July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.

USAID, Gender and Youth Inclusion Strategy: USAID Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity in Tajikistan, August 2018.

USAID/Central Asia, Central Asia Region Energy Links Project, Gender Assessment, 2018.

“Vocational Courses.” 2018. NABWT. September 18, 2018. <http://nabwt.tj/vocational-courses/>.

Women Water Forum, Bridging Voices to Actions: Synthesis Report, June 19, 2018.

### Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews

July 15, 2019

- EG Team: Tojiddin Najmedinov, Economic Growth Project Management Specialist; Muhiddin Nurmatov, Economic Growth Project Management Specialist (USAID)
- Dilafrouz Zoirova, DG Specialist (USAID)
- Lola Yuldasheva, Health Management Specialist, Malika Mahkambaeva, Health Management Specialist (USAID)
- FGD with IPs: Kurbonov A. (MoveAbility), Popova A. (Internews), Shackleton J. (Accelerate Prosperity/Aga Khan Foundation), Qodirova N. (Land Market Reform), Bakhtdavlatova A. (Partnership for Socio Economic Development), Ismoilova J. (Project Hope), Akhmedova K. (Tajikistan Health and Nutrition), Terry Giles (Read With Me), Kamilla Mamadnazarova (FtF TAWA), Mirzoev B. (OSC RWM), Komilzoda S.

July 16, 2019

- Nigina Rajabova, State Agency on Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (Member of the Women Entrepreneurships Task Force)
- NASMB, Matluba Uldjabayeva, Chairperson, Sanovbar Imomnazarova, Director, Aminova Nasibakhon
- National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan, Sanavbar Sharipova (Skype)
- League of Women with Disability/NGO “Ishtirok,” Saida Inoyatova
- LGBTI Informant (Anonymous)
- Coalition From De-Jure to De Facto Equality, Chair, Tatiana Bozrikova
- Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan, Javohir Akobirova, Head of Gender and International Relations Department

July 17, 2019 – site visit to Bokhtar

- NGO “Parvozi Parastu,” Nigora Nuralieva
- Two FGDs with female beneficiaries of the FtF projects in Bokhtar, Khatlon District

July 18, 2019

- FGD with the Embassy Dushanbe Gender Working Group – Muyassar Qoziva, Programme Manager, INL, U.S. Department of State, Khurshed Rakhimov, PolEcon Assistant, U.S. Embassy, Malika Jurakulova, USAID TCO Gender Adviser
- Mavjuda Nabieva, Education Management Specialist (USAID)
- ADB, Gulnora Kholova, Gender Adviser
- FtF Land Market Development, Chynara Arapova, Chief of Party
- UN Women, Aziza Hamidova, Head of Office, Diana Ismailova
- Internews, Abdumalik Kadirov, Country Director, Angelina Popova, Gender POC
- NGO “Gender and Development,” Nargis Saidova, Director, Viloyat Mirzoeva, Gender Adviser

## ANNEX 6: GSIA COUNTRY REPORT – TURKMENISTAN

### CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary .....	109
2.	Introduction .....	110
3.	Methodology and Limitations.....	110
4.	Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion .....	111
4.1	Gender Equality.....	111
4.2	LGBTI .....	112
4.3	People With Disabilities.....	113
4.4	Youth.....	113
4.5	Gender-Based Violence.....	114
5.	Findings by Sector.....	114
5.1.	Economic Growth .....	114
5.1.1	Trade and Markets .....	114
5.1.2	Energy.....	116
5.1.3	Water .....	117
5.2.	Democracy and Governance .....	117
5.2.1	Civil Society.....	117
5.2.2	Justice and Governance.....	118
5.2.3	Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP).....	118
5.3.	Health .....	119
5.3.1	Tuberculosis.....	119
6.	Recommendations .....	119
	Annex 1: Gender Analysis Domains .....	122
	Annex 2: Bibliography.....	125
	Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews .....	126

## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CA	Central Asia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTIP	Countering Trafficking in Persons
CTJ	Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Program
DV	Domestic Violence
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoT	Government of Turkmenistan
GSIA	Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
TB	Tuberculosis
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary National Review

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkmenistan is one of the most repressive countries in the world. Its citizens lack basic rights and freedoms, and their daily lives are, in one way or another, controlled and monitored by the government. Currently, the country is in the worst economic position it has been in since it achieved independence. Access to basic foodstuffs—flour, sugar, cooking oil, bread, and eggs, are difficult to find in price-controlled state stores. Private stores have the goods, but the prices are unattainable for many. Additional difficulties came for Turkmen citizens in 2017, when the government cut back on subsidies for gas, electricity, water, and medication. It is within this austere framework and a long history of human rights violations that the Government of Turkmenistan (GoT) has decided to focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, Turkmenistan was one of the first countries to formally accept all 17 SDGs by adapting them to its national plans and strategies on socio-economic development. The country has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); it has numerous laws and policies that guarantee gender equality and guarantee and protect the rights of certain vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities. One key gender equality piece of legislation that is missing is on prevention of gender-based violence (GBV).

However, in reality, the GoT is actively promoting gender stereotypes and discrimination against women. Women are instructed what to wear, what goods they are allowed to purchase, and what mode of transportation to take. It could be argued that this focus on controlling women's daily lives in such detail takes the attention away from much more serious issues that are not being addressed at all, such as violence against women, occupational segregation and the wage gender gap, women's limited access to assets and inheritance, violations of women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, and women's absence in private and public decision-making beyond national parliaments. The government's silence on these issues further perpetuates the existing gender stereotypes at the family, community, and societal levels, which view women through the lens of reproduction, marriage, and unpaid home work, and are biased against women in positions of power and leadership. Similarly, vulnerable groups—people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) populations, youth, ethnic minorities, victims of trafficking—are faced with numerous structural and societal obstacles that prevent them from participating as full-fledged citizens of their country.

Absence of a strong civil society, and lack of exposure to progressive voices coming from outside the country make Turkmenistan a difficult environment for donors to operate in; as a result, only a handful of international organizations are still in country, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The silver lining in this very challenging situation may be the GoT's clear efforts to show to the rest of the world that they have achieved SDGs. USAID can take this opportunity to pay particular attention to SDG 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Recommendations below propose several ways in which this could be accomplished.*

### **Economic Growth**

- Support youth employment.
- Provide individual support to women with disabilities interested in entrepreneurship.
- Support a study of female entrepreneurs in Turkmenistan.
- Support baseline study on gender issues in the energy sector.
- Support baseline study on gender issues in the water sector.

### **Democracy and Governance**

- Support civil society organization (CSO) participation in regional CSO fora.
- Develop a small-grants mechanism for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work with targeted vulnerable groups.
- Encourage and support the establishment of national gender machinery.
- Invest in awareness raising on the GoT's international commitments and SDGs.
- Support opening of a shelter for male trafficking victims.
- Support operations of trafficking hotlines.

## **Health**

- Support awareness raising and campaigns against tuberculosis (TB)-related stigma.

## **GBV**

- Organize joint study tours (GoT, donors, and NGOs) to learn progressive practices in social services, shelters, and call centers.
- Work with the Women's Union to combat GBV.
- Provide support to domestic violence (DV) shelters around the country.
- Encourage and support development of anti-GBV law.

## **People with Disabilities**

- Develop and support the implementation of the curriculum for sign language interpretation.

## **LGBTI**

- Explore opportunities for documenting human rights violations against LGBTI communities.

## **Youth**

- Support development of resource centers for youth.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan country reports are the main building blocks for the overarching Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA) report for USAID/Central Asia's new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDSCS).

Country-level findings in these four reports demonstrate how men and women are faring in their respective countries, and what challenges they are facing, along with vulnerable groups that include people with disabilities; LGBTI persons; youth; and ethnic and religious minorities, where applicable. Gaps identified in these reports provide the basis for recommendations for USAID's actions in each respective country. The findings in this report are presented sectorally, however additional presentation of findings through the lens of five domains of gender analysis is in Annex I.

## **3. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS**

The data presented in this report were collected via 1) a desk review of relevant documents (Annex 2); and 2) eight interviews with stakeholders (four USAID staff and four implementing partners [IPs]) (Annex 3). Due to difficulties related to obtaining a visa to Turkmenistan, the team conducted interviews with six key informants located in Turkmenistan via phone or Skype from Almaty; another two filled out interview questionnaires and submitted them via e-mail. Additional limited information was provided via USAID/CA staff and IP survey. The main challenge in data collection has been the lack of reliable data on the country, stemming from Turkmenistan's status as a closed country with negligible, if any, freedom of information. Therefore, the information found via desk research is often produced in a sanitized way by the GoT. In addition, the cautious nature of stakeholder answers is understandable, considering that they are physically located in Turkmenistan, where their safety and security must be taken into account. Therefore, the information presented here is the most accurate within the limitations outlined above, however without independent verification by the GSIA team.



## 4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 4.1 Gender Equality

The 2016 Turkmenistan Constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms to Turkmen men and women. Gender-based violations of equality are punishable under the law. The country has signed numerous international human rights treaties, including CEDAW and CRPD, and is one of the first countries to nationalize the SDGs. It has also developed its own national laws and policies in line with these treaties. In 2015, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan adopted the *Law On State Guarantees of Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*. The country has the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2015-2020),<sup>254</sup> the National Action Plan on human rights in Turkmenistan (2016-2020), and the National Action Plan of Turkmenistan on combating trafficking in persons (2016-2018). However, the implementation of national-level laws and action plans, as well as compliance with international treaties, has been highly problematic. Arguably the most significant gap in the country's commitment to achieving gender equality is the absence of the national gender machinery. While the other three countries—Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—are also lacking this organ, they at least have Women's National Commissions or National Committees which attempt to fill that role, even if not at the executive policy-making level. While it is true that gender mainstreaming at the national level is the responsibility of all government ministries and agencies have their roles to play in the implementation of the National Action Plan, there must be a leading agency to guide and monitor the implementation and hold parties accountable. It should also be mentioned that sex disaggregated data that would help determine gender gaps in social and economic spheres is largely absent. As a result, Turkmenistan is not ranked in any existing international gender equality indices, such as the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index, World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, and Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index.

The government's practical approaches to achieving gender equality, however, seem to be in discord with its national and international commitments. The most obvious examples are limitations imposed on women's choices regarding their appearance, mobility, and sexuality. The GoT has strict ideas about what traditional Turkmen women should look like. As such, female civil servants must wear the traditional Turkmen long embroidered dress. They are also forbidden from dying their hair, wearing nail polish, or using eyelash or nail extensions. In schools, girls cannot choose to wear their own clothing, but all must wear long green traditional dresses and have their hair tied up into braids. While male civil servants also have a proscribed uniform—a suit and a tie—the cost of traditional Turkmen dresses is much higher, putting women, who already make less money than men, into a difficult financial situation.

Women are also forbidden from buying or smoking cigarettes and earlier this year, the law enforcement arbitrarily started taking away drivers' licenses. Furthermore, women are not allowed to freely organize in women's organizations. All women's groups must be registered under the auspices of the Women's Union of Turkmenistan, which is a government-created structure, and therefore not an enabling environment for free discourse on women's rights.

The GoT's focus on girls and women's virginity and honor and their efforts to impose control on their sexuality starts in educational institutions. In 2017, educational establishment prevented female students from using ground transportation, and only allowing air transport usage, concerned with girls' "moral character" when using taxis. In 2018, the National Security Service, police officers, and medical doctors came into educational establishments and carried out forcible gynecological exams of female secondary

---

<sup>254</sup> The National Action Plan on Gender Equality has 15 targets and 60 activities, some of which include: Improving legislation in line with CEDAW recommendations and gender equality principles; National mechanisms to promote gender equality; Eliminating gender stereotypes; Identifying priority areas to address GBV; Increasing women's competitiveness in labor markets; Increasing the number of women in top management posts; Improving maternal and child health outcomes; Greater participation of women in social, political, and professional life; Equal access to health services and sexual education; Women in detention; and Data collection to monitor and evaluate the Plan.

school students and inspected the contents of their mobile phones.<sup>255</sup> Secondary and other educational institutions, as shared by the GoT in their most recent report to the CEDAW Committee (as a proof of promotion of gender equality) offer to girls and women discussions and lectures on topics including “The family is my fortress,” “My friendly and happy family,” “The sacred family begins with marriage,” “The honor of girls is the honor of the people,” and “Equality between men and women.” It is difficult to imagine how “Equality between men and women” course aligns with the other offered courses, whose titles, in fact, are suggesting the complete opposite.

Additionally, the GoT provides financial initiatives for childbearing. In 2008, women who gave birth to and raised eight or more children were entitled to monetary and social benefits. Working mothers of three or more children pay 30 percent less in taxes, and for those with five or more children there is no tax obligation.<sup>256</sup> Since the institution of family is revered in Turkmenistan, and women are taught to view their self-worth through that lens, many will stay in an abusive relationship, since violence may be a small price to pay for preserving their social standing. A woman without a husband, or a divorced woman is seen as a “party,” “an accessible” woman, or even a prostitute, a reputation that has negative consequences not only on her, but on her children.<sup>257</sup> There are reports that divorced or widowed women have to have a guardian, and many have lost their jobs based on their status.<sup>258</sup>

The lack of true commitment to gender equality by the government perpetuates the existence of a patriarchal society that is based on traditionally prescribed gender roles and responsibilities, as well as gender stereotypes. Gender roles start in childhood; gender disparity between boys and girls for household chores is visible at the age of 12 and increases once they reach 15 years of age.<sup>259</sup> From an early age, girls are taught to work (embroidery, sewing, weaving carpets) and carry out household tasks. They are also taught to obey men, including boys of their own age, reinforcing their secondary status in the family and society. An example of how this way of thinking can have serious negative consequences on women’s economic wellbeing is inheritance. While both sons and daughters have equal rights to inheritance (Art. 1154 of the Civil Code), given the widely accepted girls’ secondary status, it is customary that sons receive the largest share, especially the youngest son who takes care of the parents and is the recipient of the rest of their assets.<sup>260</sup> In contrast to girls, boys are encouraged to “be boys,” and no expectations are placed on them to perform domestic work.<sup>261</sup> Therefore, when girls grow up, they are expected to carry on with this role of performing household chores, getting married young, having children, and taking care of their children, husbands, and households. If they were to work outside of home, that would be in addition to all the unpaid work they were already doing at home. Men are expected to be breadwinners and decision-makers of the family. As a result, there is sex segregation in education and employment; women are concentrated in lower paying sectors such as health care, education, and service professions, and are absent from decision-making positions in government and business.

## 4.2 LGBTI

The LGBTI community in Turkmenistan is stigmatized and heavily repressed by the state. Consensual sex between men is illegal and subject to a two-year prison sentence, and an additional 2-5 years in a labor camp (Article 135 of the Criminal Code). The government does not apply antidiscrimination laws nor legal protection for LGBTI persons. In fact, Turkmenistan is one of the eight countries in the world where the law enforcement and medical personnel perform forced anal examinations on men and transgender individuals who are arrested on homosexuality-related charges, to find “proof” of homosexual conduct.<sup>262</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights, Alternative Report, Submission to the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2018.

<sup>256</sup> OECD. *Social Institutions & Gender Index for Turkmenistan*. 2019.

<sup>257</sup> Norwegian Helsinki Committee, “Women: Turkmenistan’s second-class citizens: Equal only to injustice and vulnerable to arbitrariness,” 2013

<sup>258</sup> “CEDAW discusses with civil society organizations the situation of women in New Zealand, Turkmenistan, and State of Palestine,” UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), July 9, 2018.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23349&LangID=E>.

<sup>259</sup> UNICEF, *Analysis of Situation of Children’s and Women’s Rights in Turkmenistan*, 2019.

<sup>260</sup> OECD, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>261</sup> Norwegian Helsinki Committee, 2013 *op cit*.

<sup>262</sup> Adam Hug, “Introduction: Putting the spotlight on Turkmenistan,” Foreign Policy Center, July 12, 2019, <https://fpc.org.uk/introduction-putting-the-spotlight-on-turkmenistan/>.

LGBTI community members fear the law enforcement, as they have experienced detention, threats, abuse, and extortion from law enforcement officials. Therefore, they rarely report incidences of violence against them, making it difficult to measure how widespread these violations are.

### 4.3 People With Disabilities

The 2013 Code on the Social Protection of the Population defines social protection policies for persons with disabilities and establishes quotas and workplaces for persons with disabilities. In reality, however, people with disabilities are stigmatized by their families and communities, and face challenges related to education, mobility, employment, and health care access. Women with disabilities are vulnerable to discrimination based on their sex and their disability. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities. They are often viewed by their families as children, incapable of making their own decisions and venturing outside the house, as non-sexual beings who could never be wanted by any other persons, and as charity cases. They frequently experience discrimination in health care, especially related to reproductive health. Doctors will often try to convince them not to have children, or strongly encourage them to have an abortion if they are pregnant.

As is the case in other CA countries, disability in Turkmenistan is viewed from the medical, rather than social empowerment perspective. This means that people with disabilities are viewed as medical cases that may be rehabilitated and cured. There have been reports that the GoT has, in order to cut state expenditures, taken away disability status from people with disabilities who were receiving state benefits. For example, there are reports of disabled persons having to pay 500 to 5,000 manats (\$142 to \$1,420) to the doctors or government officials in order to keep their disability status. For those who refuse, or are unable to do so, the doctors will take away their status, proclaiming them “cured” and therefore disqualifying them from further state benefits.<sup>263</sup>

### 4.4 Youth

Turkmenistan is a young country, with youth being over 50 percent of its population. Main issues facing youth are lack of education and employment opportunities. There are only 8,300 university spots for the 100,000 students who graduated from high school every year, and restrictions are imposed on students interested in studying abroad, especially for girls.<sup>264</sup> Informants reported that connections and/or bribes are required to secure one’s admission to a higher education institution. For example, a \$40,000 bribe is needed to enroll in medical school. Currently, there are 24 higher education institutions and 45 vocational education institutes, open to all residents of the country. At tertiary levels, only about 37 percent of students are female, and there is a gap in terms of study. The number of students in those institutions are on the rise, as was the number of students abroad, many of whom received student vouchers, which enabled them to study at prestigious universities in Russia, China, and elsewhere.<sup>265</sup> Despite these government-sanctioned programs, many students who study abroad find that, upon their return to Turkmenistan, their degrees are not recognized. The Ministry of Education has issued a list of occupations for which the degrees can be obtained in Turkmenistan (for example, economics or management). Therefore, if an individual has received his or her degree in such a field abroad, that degree is not recognized. This policy gravely hampers educated young people’s prospects for finding a job in their home country, and from Turkmen economy benefiting from the knowledge and skills they acquired by studying abroad.

---

<sup>263</sup> Bruce Pannier, “Paying To Stay Disabled In Turkmenistan,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 24, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-disabled-state-subsidies-cutbacks/28994142.html>.

<sup>264</sup> “Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviews the report of Turkmenistan,” UN OHCHR, July 10, 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23355&LangID=E>.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

## 4.5 Gender-Based Violence

Despite the United Nations (UN) Commission's recommendation to adopt a law on violence against women, the GoT claims that this phenomenon is so uncommon in Turkmenistan that, since 2012, it only accounts for 3 percent of all reviewed cases, so there is no need for the law.<sup>266</sup> Perhaps due to this *laissez faire* approach to GBV, there is an absence of data. One positive advance is that, after four years, the Government finally approved the implementation of the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)-supported national DV prevalence study, which is supposed to target women aged 18-59 in 6,000 households.<sup>267</sup> The approval of the survey, however, included changing "domestic violence" to "health and status of women in the family," therefore further confirming the GoT's lack of willingness to address this problem.

GBV, however, is not only present in people's lives, but seems to be an accepted part of the culture, both by men and women. Twenty-six (26) percent of women ages 15-49 feel that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under the following circumstances: 1) neglecting the children (20 percent); 2) arguing with the husband (12 percent); 3) going out without telling the husband (8 percent); 4) refusing to have sex with the husband or burning the food (3 percent).<sup>268</sup> Early marriage can also be found throughout the country. Six (6) percent of women have been married before the age of 18; which is most prevalent in Lebap Velayat and least in Mary Velayat. Reasons for this harmful practice include poverty, lack of education, tradition of arranged marriages, the reported revival of the old custom of paying for a bride (*kalyn*), and gender norms within patriarchal society all contribute to the continuation of this harmful practice in Turkmenistan.<sup>269</sup>

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is supporting a project called "Prevention of violence against women." Through an NGO (Keik Okara), it supports a shelter for victims of DV, a DV hotline, free legal consultations, awareness-raising seminars, and psychological assistance to victims of DV. Additionally, it is reported that one official women's rights group in Ashgabat and several informal groups also provide assistance to DV victims.<sup>270</sup>

## 5. FINDINGS BY SECTOR

This section presents gender and social inclusion findings in the sectors and subsectors in which USAID/CA is active in Turkmenistan. They include: 1) Economic Growth (Trade and Markets, Energy, Water); 2) Democracy and Governance (Civil Society, Justice and Governance, and Countering Trafficking in Persons [CTIP]); and 3) Health (TB).

### 5.1 Economic Growth

#### 5.1.1 Trade and Markets

Turkmenistan has the largest labor force participation gender gap in Central Asia. In 2018, women's labor force participation was 53.8 percent, compared to 78.2 percent of men.<sup>271</sup> In 2018, 2.2 percent of the total employed population were those needing social support and employed under a quota, broken down as follows: persons with disabilities (6 percent), orphans in search of their first job (5.3 percent), single parents or persons acting *in loco parentis* (25.8 percent), individuals from low-income families (53.9 percent), and those affected by a radiation disaster (0.3 percent).<sup>272</sup>

As in other countries in the region, women are primarily concentrated in lower paying sectors, which include education, health, social services, hospitality, and trade. This gender occupational segregation results from gender stereotypes about what types of jobs are appropriate for men and women, which

---

<sup>266</sup> "Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights Alternative Report," 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>267</sup> "Turkmenistan joins global initiative to stop violence against women," Orient, November 11, 2018. <https://orient.tm/en/turkmenistan-joins-global-initiative-to-stop-violence-against-women/>.

<sup>268</sup> UNICEF, *Turkmenistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2015-2016*, 2017.

<sup>269</sup> "Turkmenistan," Girls Not Brides, last modified February 19, 2019. <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/turkmenistan/>.

<sup>270</sup> OECD, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>271</sup> ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.

<sup>272</sup> The Government of Turkmenistan. *Voluntary National Review: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*. 2019.

affects young men and women's field of study. According to the GoT, in 2018, an average man's monthly salary was 1,567 manats (\$448) and a woman's 1,411 manats (\$403), making the gender wage gap about 10 percent.<sup>273</sup> 2016 GoT data on the wages of employees in large and medium-sized enterprises show that women's salaries were on average 87.9 percent of men's salaries.<sup>274</sup> Besides lower wages, women have to contend with discriminatory provisions in the Labor Code, which limit their working time, overtime work and night work, as well as prevent them from holding numerous positions for the purposes of "protection." Employed women who give birth are entitled to 112 calendar days of maternity leave with 100 percent of wages paid, followed by unpaid childcare leave until the child reached the age of three. The same entitlements apply to single fathers and guardians (trustees) of minors.<sup>275</sup>

According to 2016 GoT statistics, there were 8,117 total domestic non-state enterprises in Turkmenistan. The majority of those were micro-enterprises (80.1 percent), followed by small enterprises (1 percent), medium enterprises (7.8 percent), and large enterprises (1.1 percent); additionally, there were also some 76,000 individual entrepreneurs.<sup>276</sup> Despite the fact that there are no sex disaggregated data on business ownership, anecdotal evidence points to the fact that businesses are predominately led by men. Women's businesses are usually smaller in scale and consist of the cooking and sale of bread or other foodstuffs at the bazaar, and making and sale of handicrafts like carpets, slippers, and embroidery.<sup>277</sup> Women are also shuttle traders, who travel to Turkey, buy goods (for example, fabric, clothing, jewelry) and sell them in the markets. The informal sector accounts for 7.5 percent of workers, of which a third are women.<sup>278</sup>

The enabling environment for SME development in Turkmenistan is underdeveloped. The GoT does not have any significant initiatives to support SMEs, or any microfinance opportunities for women, although in order to foster development of women's businesses, it plans to carry out programs "to develop women's entrepreneurial skills, use special credit schemes, and increase gender sensitivity of banks and institutions supporting the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).<sup>279</sup>

USAID Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs (CTJ) program has been providing trainings to female entrepreneurs, on topics including "Know About Business and Improve Your Business" and "From entrepreneur to the company." The latter course, delivered in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), is based on best international practices, and classes include both success and failure stories of international and domestic businesses, practical exercises, and discussions. This activity is aimed to help women address key corporate management issues, including weaknesses of the management system and find ways for improvement, assess how effectively their company manages human capital, and allow to exchange experience with other female entrepreneurs. The British Embassy in Ashgabat is funding a project to help young entrepreneurs, especially women and start-ups, to build their business development skills, and to connect them with resources available in Turkmenistan and learn more about entrepreneurship.<sup>280</sup> Organizations such as the Business Women's Center, established by the Turkmenistan Women's Union, support development of women's entrepreneurship in Turkmenistan by promoting a positive image of female entrepreneurs, attracting foreign investors, supporting the development of networks between female entrepreneurs, and developing their capacity.

In January 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection issued additional regulations that require companies to set aside up to 5 percent of job vacancies for persons with disabilities, as well as for single parents with large families whose children were younger than age 18 or have disabilities. However, people

---

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Turkmenistan, 2017-2021: Catalyzing Regional Cooperation and Integration, and Economic Diversification Distribution*, 2017.

<sup>275</sup> UNICEF, *Analysis of Situation of Children's and Women's Rights in Turkmenistan*, 2019.

<sup>276</sup> Holzhaecker and Skakova, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>277</sup> Norwegian Helsinki Committee, 2013 *op cit*.

<sup>278</sup> ADB, 2017 *op cit*.

<sup>279</sup> VNR, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>280</sup> "British Embassy in Turkmenistan launches a project to support local start-ups and young entrepreneurs," *Strategeast*, July 26, 2019, <https://www.strategeast.org/british-embassy-in-turkmenistan-launches-a-project-to-support-local-start-ups-and-young-entrepreneurs/>.

with disabilities report not being able to find satisfactory employment due to unofficial discrimination.<sup>281</sup> One of the concrete steps to address this challenge was the 2018 Career Fair for people with disabilities, organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, in collaboration with UNDP and several private sector companies. Prior to the Fair, UNDP provided the participants with free training on resume and interview skills and meeting potential employers.<sup>282</sup>

According to the GoT's statistics, the share of those Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETs) between the ages 15 and 29 is 8.2 percent.<sup>283</sup> Many of these individuals find themselves with the skills required by the industry, which include soft skills. There are many examples of young people trying to leave the country to find work in Turkey and becoming victims of labor trafficking. To facilitate work placement for young people, in 2017, the GoT established the Interagency Commission on Employment of Young Professionals. The Commission's goal is to "*significantly improve career guidance for young people in choosing their future profession and to prepare them for a possible change of profession during their working life in an environment of market economy and development of innovations.*"<sup>284</sup>

Through its project Enriching Youth For Tomorrow, implemented by Junior Achievement, USAID has been supporting youth in their entry into the labor market. The goal of the program is to improve the capacity of youth to contribute to their local economy and community and promote the active engagement of young people of Turkmenistan in the labor market and participation in civil society. The activity is increasing the youth competitiveness in the labor market by providing them with training on economics, business, and soft skills. It is also increasing their social involvement through development of youth civic awareness program, volunteerism, and leadership, and improving the enabling environment to support youth through national legislation. The project also targets vulnerable groups, including migrants and people with disabilities. It supported the training in basics of entrepreneurship for victims of human trafficking conducted in cooperation with International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the follow-up consultations in development of business plans by the training participants and participation in the Grant Committee for selection of best business plans who received the small grants for starting the entrepreneurial activity. In addition, in cooperation with local NGO Yenme, it conducted a training in basics of entrepreneurship and master class on photographic art for youth from low-income families and youth with disabilities.

### 5.1.2 Energy

The GoT reports its commitment to SDG 7: *Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all*. It is currently revising its National Climate Change Strategy and the Action plan on implementation of the Paris Agreement.<sup>285</sup> However, a potential missed opportunity here is focus on renewable energy, which is a part of the SDG 7 requirements. Free supply of electricity, heat, and gas to Turkmen citizens discouraged investment in renewable energy. The National Strategy of Social and Economic Transformation of Turkmenistan until 2030 and the National Climate Change Strategy are missing renewable energy targets, despite Turkmenistan's significant potential for solar and wind.<sup>286</sup> Renewable energy is one of the sectors, where, worldwide, there have frequently been lower barriers to entry for women, due to its newness.

In January 2019, electricity, gas, drinking water, and table salt ceased to be free to the consumers and tariffs were introduced, albeit at subsidized prices. No information is available as of yet as to how the

---

<sup>281</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Turkmenistan 2018 Human Rights Report*, 2018, <https://tm.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/turkmenistan-2018-human-rights-report/>.

<sup>282</sup> "Private sector of Turkmenistan embarks on implementation of SDGs adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind," UNDP, August 30, 2018, <http://www.tm.undp.org/content/turkmenistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/undp-Career-Fair-for-people-with-disabilities.html>.

<sup>283</sup> VNR, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>285</sup> VNR, 2019 *op cit*.

<sup>286</sup> Holzhaecker and Skakova, 2019 *op cit*.



tariffs are affecting the population, especially the most vulnerable groups. According to the GoT data, proportion of Turkmen citizens living below 50 percent of median income is 7.2 percent.<sup>287</sup>

In regard to gender equality in the provision of energy services, women are underrepresented in Turkmenistan, as is the case around the world. The team was not able to find any research related to women in the sector specifically in Turkmenistan, but barriers they face worldwide include gender stereotypes, sex segregation in school, lack of girls studying science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and occupational segregation, where women are absent from the energy sector. An example of this situation is evident at Turkmenenergo Corporation, the state power corporation, where USAID Energy Links project collected employment sex-disaggregated data for the period 2016-2018. The overall number of female employees is 71, or 41 percent, out of total 173 employees. While this is a fairly high percentage of female employees, they are absent from decision-making positions. The highest management body of the organization, the General Directorate, has six members who are all men. Twenty-one (21) out of 72 (29 percent) of engineers at Turkmenenergo are female. In 73 percent of divisions, women are not represented in managerial positions; in some divisions, such as the Division of Transport, only men are employed. Support-type divisions (*i.e.*, not technical), such as Economics Division, Accounting and Bookkeeping Division, Administrative Division, and Administrative Supply Division, all or the overwhelming majority of employees are female.

### 5.1.3 Water

Eighty (80) percent of the territory of Turkmenistan is desert, and as a result, water is fully drawn from transboundary water sources. Agriculture and other livelihood activities are dependent on access to water. In rural areas, women are the majority of agriculture workers and household workers, and, along with children, are often used as unpaid labor due to the widespread home farming and leasing of agricultural land.<sup>288</sup> Worldwide studies have shown that women are central to the provision, management, and safeguarding of water. Yet, decision-making regarding land and water management and use is done by men.

There is an overwhelming lack of Turkmenistan-specific information in regard to gender dynamics in water use and management.

## 5.2 Democracy and Governance

### 5.2.1 Civil Society

In Turkmenistan, the civil society, as a provider of balance to the governmental power, does not exist. All CSOs and NGOs are controlled by the government, disallowing for any independence, dissent, or a difference of an opinion. There is limited space available for organizations that are concerned with non-controversial topics such as sports, cultural issues, and to a certain degree, women's and environmental issues, as long as they are not critical of the government. Centrally organized groups such as the Magtymguly Youth Organization, the Women's Union of Turkmenistan, and the National Center of Trade Unions of Turkmenistan are active and work with international donors, however they are not independent. All NGOs must register with the Ministry of Justice; unregistered groups are penalized. Foreign funding must be reported to the Ministry, as do permissions for holding large events, restricting free assembly.

In other countries in the region, social media is an effective way to build and strengthen civil society. In Turkmenistan, where media and channels of communication are controlled by the government, this would be a challenging undertaking. In addition, the Internet penetration across the country is very low (estimates range from 12 percent<sup>289</sup> to 21 percent<sup>290</sup>), and the majority of population gets their information from state-controlled television.

There are only a few donors left in the country, including UN agencies (UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], UNFPA, United Nations Children's Fund

---

<sup>287</sup> VNR, 2019 *op cit.*

<sup>288</sup> OECD, 2019 *op cit.*

<sup>289</sup> Holzhaecker and Skakova, 2019 *op cit.*

<sup>290</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit.*

[UNICEF]), USAID, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and OSCE in a limited capacity.

### 5.2.2 Justice and Governance

In Turkmenistan, access to justice is highly compromised for those who in any way challenge the GoT. This includes human rights defenders and journalists who portray the government in an unflattering way. For “regular” citizens, it is difficult to challenge court decisions. Conditions in Turkmen prisons are generally terrible; prisoners are often mistreated and denied family visits, food, and medical supplies.

As of September 1, 2016, women made up 27.42 percent of the deputies of the Mejlis. In 2015, in the elections to the *gengeshes* (rural municipalities), 1,215 women were elected (20.11 percent).<sup>291</sup> In 2018, although women served in high-ranking government positions, there was only one female member of the Cabinet of Ministers (out of 12).<sup>292</sup>

In the security services, courts, police, prosecution, and local government *khyakimliks*, the majority of staff are male; the few female employees are usually in administrative positions.<sup>293</sup> Overall, 391 women (45.7 percent) are employed in the judicial system; 41 are judges, and 36 are department heads,<sup>294</sup> confirming the trend of a lack of women in decision-making positions.

The USAID Governance Strengthening Program is aimed at improving Turkmenistan’s public administration. Active since 2015, the program has supported numerous capacity-building trainings for GoT officials on topics including land reform, electronic governance, e-health, ethical trainings, environment, etc. Previously in collaboration with UN Women, and more recently with UNDP, the project conducted a series of joint trainings on gender responsive budgeting in Ashgabat and in the provinces. The training resulted in development of the Roadmap-Action Plan on gender budgeting and planning which is currently under the consideration of the GoT.

### 5.2.3 Countering Trafficking in Persons

According to the United States (U.S.) State Department, Turkmenistan was one of the 22 countries with the worst human trafficking record in 2018. The 2019 *Trafficking in Persons report* rated Turkmenistan as a Tier 3 country—meaning that it does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. One of the key human rights violations that the GoT continues to engage in is massive mobilizations of its adult citizens for forced labor in the annual cotton harvest and in public works projects, not holding any officials responsible for these crimes, and imprisoning independent observers who bring attention to this issue. The overall system for helping victims of trafficking is not very efficient. Despite the anti-trafficking law, many measures are not being implemented by the government, namely providing comprehensive services to the victims of trafficking. There is an overall lack of funding; one of the hotlines was closed down for a while due to the lack of funding. There is one NGO-operated shelter for female trafficking victims in Turkmenistan, supported with foreign-donor funding, which provides comprehensive services, including local reintegration and job placement. The freedom of movement is often curtailed for Turkmen citizens who are trying to leave the country, which can be an issue for those individuals vulnerable to trafficking while attempting to leave the country through unofficial channels.<sup>295</sup> All told, the report found an overall lack of motivation and initiatives by the GoT to address trafficking.

USAID/CA’s Dignity and Rights program works on trafficking prevention by supporting the GoT and relevant civil society actors in their efforts to respond to the problem of human trafficking through prevention and protection activities.

---

<sup>291</sup> CEDAW. *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. Fifth periodic report of States parties due in 2016: Turkmenistan*. November 2016.

<sup>292</sup> United States Department of State, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>293</sup> Norwegian Helsinki Committee, 2013 *op cit*.

<sup>294</sup> CEDAW, 2016 *op cit*.

<sup>295</sup> United States Department of State, 2019 *Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan*, 2019.



## 5.3 Health

### 5.3.1 Tuberculosis

Turkmenistan's TB epidemic presents a challenge not only to its public health system but also to the country's long-term economic resilience. As in other Central Asian countries, stigma is attached to TB patients, who will often stop their treatments due to its duration. TB treatment regimen is fairly long (6 months to 2 years), and the medication can cause side effects. Furthermore, factors such as poverty, homelessness, and alcoholism may play a role in decisions to quit the treatment.

To combat TB, USAID is working to introduce new drugs that will help shorten treatment time. Over the last 20 years, USAID has helped increase the success rate of TB treatment by 32 percent.<sup>296</sup> Other international organizations working to prevent and eliminate TB in Turkmenistan include WHO, UNDP, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Red Crescent Society, a government-affiliated association, has a volunteer visiting nurse program who visit TB patients for regular checkups. Among TB patients, there are more men than women, due to conditions of life and attitude to personal health. Men frequently exhibit risky behavior, which can land them in prisons, where TB can be easily contracted.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Unlike the recommendations for the other three countries, where USAID is recommended to proactively forge ahead with its gender and social inclusion agenda, due to the insular and challenging nature of the working environment, the recommendation here is to proceed with caution, and utilize effective, yet non-controversial points of entry, such as the GoT's commitment to achieving the SDGs.

### Economic Growth

#### Trade and markets

- **Support youth employment.** Continue supporting youth in transitioning from school to work processes, as there seems to be a shortage of such opportunities, in close collaboration with the private sector and NGOs. Explore a partnership with the Interagency Commission on Employment of Young Professionals. Develop achievable targets for participation of vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking, people with disabilities, and youth from low-income families.
- **Provide individual support to women with disabilities interested in entrepreneurship.** As one of the most discriminated against cohorts, women with disabilities need additional assistance with starting an income generating opportunity. In collaboration with a disability NGO, a group of women interested in becoming entrepreneurs can be identified, and then provided required training and guidance throughout the entire process. This opportunity would also be an excellent way to build NGO capacity, since they would be able to lead the process on their own, with another group of women.
- **Support a study of female entrepreneurs in Turkmenistan.** There is a gap in knowledge and data on female entrepreneurs—on their businesses, challenges, and opportunities. CTJ is a good vehicle to undertake this study, considering that it already has established relationships with female entrepreneurs through their trainings, and connections with other donors in the SME space in Turkmenistan, such as EBRD, who might be willing to jointly work on this project.

#### Energy

- **Support baseline study on gender issues in the energy sector.** Fund a study on barriers to women's participation in the energy sector. The study would most likely yield recommendations that could enable USAID to mainstream gender considerations into Turkmenenergo and Ministry of Energy. An example of a very successful USG program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best

---

<sup>296</sup> "Turkmenistan: Our Work", USAID, last modified July 17, 2017.

practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities (<https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>).

#### Water

- **Support baseline study on gender issues in the water sector.** As with energy, there are no data on gender dynamics in the water sector. USAID-supported Supporting Climate Resilient Livelihoods in Agricultural Communities in Drought-Prone Areas of Turkmenistan (SCRL) project, can serve as a vehicle for producing research on gender aspects of water use and management, and organizing a round table or a conference to disseminate the findings.

#### Democracy and Governance

##### Civil Society

- **Support CSO participation in regional CSO fora.** This would provide an opportunity for networking with regional civil society colleagues and to speak up openly about their challenges and issues.
- **Develop a small-grants mechanism for NGOs to work with targeted vulnerable groups.**

##### Justice and Governance

- **Encourage and support the establishment of national gender machinery.** This key element to gender mainstreaming at the national level is missing in Turkmenistan. USAID can diplomatically help, in collaboration with other key donors such as UNDP and GIZ, the GoT understand that this structure is necessary for the country's achievement of SDGs.
- **Invest in awareness raising on GoT's international commitments and SDGs.** This support, in a sustained manner, can include a variety of activities, such as round table discussions between the government and the public; media campaigns to inform the public about GoT's international obligations in a positive way; training for civil servants on international conventions that Turkmenistan is a party to; dissemination of reports Turkmenistan has submitted to international treaty committees, such as CEDAW, CRPD, *etc.*

##### C-TIP

- **Support opening of a shelter for male trafficking victims.** Currently, there is only a shelter for female trafficking victims in Turkmenistan. The shelter can be NGO-administered, and should include comprehensive services, including local reintegration and job placement.
- **Support operations of trafficking hotlines.** There seems to be a shortage of trafficking hotlines in the country. Conduct a needs assessment for these types of hotlines, and provide assistance based on the assessment's recommendations.

## Health

### TB

- **Support awareness raising and campaigns against TB-related stigma.** Stigma related to TB prevents individuals from completing their treatments and puts them under unnecessary pressure in interactions with their family members and communities. Work with the GoT on programs that openly discuss TB on television and radio programs, and to develop print advertisements with messages against TB-related stigma.

### GBV

- **Organize joint study tours (GoT, donors, and NGOs) to learn progressive practices in social services, shelters, and call centers.** Ideally this type of a study tour should be conducted regionally, but unfortunately Central Asia does not offer any best practices in this area.
- **Work with the Women's Union to combat GBV.** The Women Union's regional women's information and resource centers are an excellent entry point for openly sharing information about GBV, and presenting it not as shameful family secret, but a threat to public health and safety, and happy and healthy families.
- **Provide support to DV shelters around the country.** A needs assessment of the shelters should be undertaken to identify best ways to assist each shelter. Types of assistance may include capacity-building for shelter staff and hotline volunteers, provision of free legal and psychological aid, life skills training for women staying at the shelters, etc.
- **Encourage and support development of anti-GBV law.** Having legislation that addresses GBV is a requirement for achieving the SDGs. The GoT has so far been resistant to developing this law.

### People with Disabilities

- **Develop and support the implementation of the curriculum for sign language interpretation.** Currently, there are no sign language interpreters in Turkmenistan. This should be undertaken in collaboration with relevant ministries and Turkmen institutions of higher learning/medical universities. Additional scholarships can be provided to individuals to study in this field abroad.

### LGBTI

- **Explore opportunities for documenting human rights violations against LGBTI communities.** Considering the current situation for LGBTI community in Turkmenistan, it is important to approach any LGBTI activities with caution and thoughtfulness.

### Youth

- **Support development of resource centers for youth.** In cooperation with local NGOs and the private sector, these resources can provide access to the Internet and other resources (books, magazines, etc.), as well as information and consultations about education and employment opportunities.

## Annex I: Gender Analysis Domains

### I. Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices

#### *Gender Equality*

The 2016 Turkmenistan Constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms to Turkmen men and women. Gender-based violations of equality are punishable under the law. The country has signed numerous international human rights treaties, including CEDAW and CRPD, and is one of the first countries to nationalize the SDGs. It has also developed its own national laws and policies in line with these treaties. In 2015, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan adopted the *Law On State Guarantees of Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*. The country has the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2015-2020), the National Action Plan on human rights in Turkmenistan (2016-2020), and the National Action Plan of Turkmenistan on combating trafficking in persons (2016-2018). However, the implementation of national-level laws and action plans, as well as compliance with international treaties has been highly problematic. Arguably the most significant gap in the country's commitment to achieving gender equality is the absence of the national gender machinery. While the other three countries—Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—are also lacking this organ, they at least have Women's National Commissions or National Committees which attempt to fill that role, even if not at the executive policy-making level. While it is true that gender mainstreaming at the national level is the responsibility of all government ministries and agencies have their roles to play in the implementation of the National Action Plan, there must be a leading agency to guide and monitor the implementation and hold parties accountable. It should also be mentioned that sex disaggregated data that would help determine gender gaps in social and economic spheres are largely absent. As a result, Turkmenistan is not ranked in any existing international gender equality indices, such as UNDP's Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index, OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index, World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, and Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index.

The GoT provides financial initiatives for childbearing. In 2008, women who gave birth to and raised eight or more children were entitled to monetary and social benefits. Working mothers of three or more children pay 30 percent less in taxes, and for those with five or more children there is no tax obligation.

There are discriminatory provisions in the Labor Code, which limit women's working time, overtime work and night work, as well as prevent them from holding numerous positions for the purposes of "protection." Employed women who give birth are entitled to 112 calendar days of maternity leave with 100 percent of wages paid, followed by unpaid childcare leave until the child reached the age of three. The same entitlements apply to single fathers and guardians (trustees) of minors.<sup>297</sup>

Both sons and daughters have equal rights to inheritance (Art. 1154 of the Civil Code), however, given widely accepted girls' secondary status, it is customary that sons receive the largest share, especially the youngest son who takes care of the parents and is the recipient of the rest of their assets.

#### *LGBTI*

The LGBTI community in Turkmenistan is stigmatized and heavily repressed by the state. Consensual sex between men is illegal and subject to a two-year prison sentence, and an additional 2-5 years in a labor camp (Article 135 of the Criminal Code). The government does not apply antidiscrimination laws nor legal protection for LGBTI persons. In fact, Turkmenistan is one of the eight countries in the world where the law enforcement and medical personnel perform forced anal examinations on men and transgender individuals who are arrested on homosexuality-related charges, to find "proof" of homosexual conduct. LGBTI community members fear the law enforcement, as they have experienced detention, threats, abuse, and extortion from law enforcement officials. Therefore, they rarely report incidences of violence against them, making it difficult to know how widespread these violations are.

---

<sup>297</sup> UNICEF, 2019 *op cit*.

## *People With Disabilities*

The 2013 Code on the Social Protection of the Population defines social protection policies for persons with disabilities and establishes quotas and workplaces for persons with disabilities. In January 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection issued additional regulations that require companies to set aside up to 5 percent of job vacancies for persons with disabilities, as well as for single parents with large families whose children were younger than age 18 or have disabilities. However, people with disabilities report not being able to find satisfactory employment due to unofficial discrimination.

### **II. Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

Turkmenistan is a patriarchal society that is based on traditionally prescribed gender roles and responsibilities, as well as gender stereotypes. Gender roles start in childhood; gender disparity between boys and girls for household chores is visible at the age of 12 and increases once they reach 15 years of age. From an early age, girls are taught to work (embroidery, sewing, weaving carpets) and carry out household tasks. They are also taught to obey men, including boys of their own age, reinforcing their secondary status in the family and society. In contrast to girls, boys are encouraged to “be boys,” and no expectations are placed on them to perform domestic work.

Since the institution of family is revered in Turkmenistan, and women are taught to view their self-worth through that lens, many will stay in an abusive relationship, since violence may be a small price to pay for preserving their social standing. A woman without a husband, or a divorced woman is seen as a “party,” “an accessible” woman, or even a prostitute, a reputation that has negative consequences not only on her, but on her children. There are reports that divorced or widowed women have to have a guardian, and many have lost their jobs based on their status.

### **III. Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

When girls grow up, they are expected to carry on with performing household chores, getting married young, having children, taking care of them, their husbands, and households. If they were to work outside of home, that would be in addition to all the unpaid work they were already doing at home. Men are expected to be breadwinners and decision-makers of the family. As a result, there is sex segregation in education and employment; women are concentrated in lower paying sectors such as health care, education, and service professions, and are absent from decision-making positions in government and business.

In rural areas, women are the majority of agriculture workers and household workers, and, along with children, are often used as unpaid labor due to the widespread home farming and leasing of agricultural land.

### **IV. Access to and Control over Assets and Resources**

Due to gender stereotypes resulting in educational and occupational segregation, women’s access to higher paying income generating opportunities is curtailed. In 2018, women’s labor force participation was 53.8 percent of women, compared to 78.2 percent of men. As in other countries in the region, women are primarily concentrated in lower paying sectors, which include education, health, social services, hospitality, and trade. According to the GoT, in 2018, an average man’s monthly salary was 1,567 manats and a woman’s 1,411 manats, making the gender wage gap about 10 percent. Women are also legally banned from accessing certain occupations, which are deemed by the government “too dangerous” for women to perform. In addition, government’s interference with citizens’ travel abroad puts at risk livelihoods of women who frequently travel to Turkey to purchase goods and sell them in the markets in Turkmenistan.

### **V. Patterns of Power and Decision-Making**

Women are underrepresented in decision-making positions in public and private spheres. As of September 1, 2016, women made up 27.42 percent of the deputies of the Mejlis. In 2015, in the elections to the *gengeshes* (rural municipalities), 1,215 women were elected (20.11 percent). In 2018, although women served in high-ranking government positions, there was only one female member of the Cabinet of Ministers (out of 12). In the security services, courts, police, prosecution, and local government

*khyakimlik*s, the majority of staff are male; the few female employees are usually in administrative positions. 391 women (45.7 percent) are employed in the judicial system; 41 are judges, and 36 are department heads, confirming the trend of lack of women in decision-making positions.

There is a lack of overall data of women's participation in decision-making positions in the private sector. In the power sector, however, they are largely underrepresented, again, primarily due to gender stereotypes, sex segregation in school, lack of girls studying STEM fields, leading to women's absence from the energy sector. An example of this situation is evident at Turkmenenergo Corporation, the state power corporation, where USAID Energy Links project collected employment sex-disaggregated data for the period 2016-2018. The overall number of female employees is 71, or 41 percent, out of total 173 employees. While this is a fairly high percentage of female employees, they are absent from decision-making positions. The highest management body of the organization, the General Directorate, has six members who are all men. Twenty-one (21) out of 72 (29 percent) of engineers at Turkmenenergo are female. In 73 percent of divisions, women are not represented in managerial positions; in some divisions, such as the Division of Transport, only men are employed. Support-type divisions (*i.e.*, not technical), such as Economics Division, Accounting and Bookkeeping Division, Administrative Division, and Administrative Supply Division, all or the overwhelming majority of employees are female.

In the water sector, worldwide studies have shown that women are central to the provision, management, and safeguarding of water. Yet, decision-making regarding land and water management and use is done by men.

#### *People With Disabilities*

People with disabilities are generally not able to make any significant decisions regarding their lives, as they are frequently treated as medical cases in need of curing, rather than individuals with agency. Their parents, medical professionals, and the government make decisions about their movements, education, and reproductive and sexual health. As individuals who continuously experience structural and societal barriers to their own development and progress, people with disabilities are completely absent from any positions of power.

## Annex 2: Bibliography

- Asian Development Bank. *Turkmenistan, 2017-2021 — Catalyzing Regional Cooperation and Integration, and Economic Diversification*. 2017.
- “British Embassy in Turkmenistan launches a project to support local start-ups and young entrepreneurs,” *Strategeast*, July 26, 2019, <https://www.strategeast.org/british-embassy-in-turkmenistan-launches-a-project-to-support-local-start-ups-and-young-entrepreneurs/>
- CEDAW. *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention. Fifth periodic report of States parties due in 2016: Turkmenistan*. November 2016.
- “CEDAW discusses with civil society organizations the situation of women in New Zealand, Turkmenistan, and State of Palestine,” UN OHCHR, July 9, 2018. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23349&LangID=E>.
- “Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviews the report of Turkmenistan,” UN OHCHR, July 10, 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23355&LangID=E>.
- ESCAP. *Examining Women’s Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.
- The Government of Turkmenistan. *Voluntary National Review: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*. 2019.
- Holzacker, Hans, and Dana Skakova. *Turkmenistan Diagnostic*. EBRD. May 2019.
- Hug, Adam. “Introduction: Putting the spotlight on Turkmenistan,” Foreign Policy Center, July 12, 2019, <https://fpc.org.uk/introduction-putting-the-spotlight-on-turkmenistan/>.
- Human Rights Watch. *Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights, Alternative Report, Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, 2018.
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee. *Women: Turkmenistan’s second-class citizens: Equal only to injustice and vulnerable to arbitrariness*. 2013.
- OECD. *Social Institutions & Gender Index for Turkmenistan*. 2019.
- Pannier, Bruce. “Paying To Stay Disabled In Turkmenistan,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 24, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-disabled-state-subsidies-cutbacks/28994142.html>.
- “Private sector of Turkmenistan embarks on implementation of SDGs adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind,” UNDP, August 30, 2018, <http://www.tm.undp.org/content/turkmenistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/undp-Career-Fair-for-people-with-disabilities.html>.
- The State Committee of Statistics of Turkmenistan and UNICEF. 2016. *2015-2016 Turkmenistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Final Report*. 2016.
- “Turkmenistan joins global initiative to stop violence against women,” *Orient*, November 11, 2018. <https://orient.tm/en/turkmenistan-joins-global-initiative-to-stop-violence-against-women/>
- UNICEF. *Analysis of Situation of Children’s and Women’s Rights in Turkmenistan*. 2019.
- USAID/Central Asia. *FY 2018 Turkmenistan Gender Key Issues*.
- USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Turkmenistan 2012*.
- USAID/Central Asia. *TKO GSP Gender Activities March 2019*.
- United States Department of State. *Turkmenistan 2018 Human Rights Report*. 2018.
- United States Department of State, 2019 *Trafficking in Persons Report: Turkmenistan*. 2019.

### **Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews**

July 22, 2019

- Jeren Hakiyeva, USAID Governance Support program (phone)
- Sabir Agabalayev, NGO Keyik Okara (phone)
- NGO KII (wishes to remain anonymous)
- Christine Weigand, UNICEF Country Representative (Skype)

July 23, 2019

- Elena Samarkina, USAID TKO (phone)
- Abadan Hayitova, USAID Governance Support program (phone)
- Arslan Omadov, Junior Achievement M&E Specialist (e-mail questionnaire)
- Gozel Atamuradova, UNDP SCRL (e-mail questionnaire)



## ANNEX 7: GSIA COUNTRY REPORT – UZBEKISTAN

### CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary .....	129
2.	Introduction .....	131
3.	Methodology and Limitations.....	131
4.	Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion .....	131
4.1	Gender Equality.....	131
4.2	LGBTI .....	132
4.3	People With Disabilities.....	132
4.4	Youth.....	133
4.5	Gender-Based Violence.....	133
5.	Findings by Sector.....	134
5.1	Economic Growth .....	134
5.1.1	Trade and Markets .....	134
5.1.2	Energy.....	135
5.1.3	Water .....	136
5.2	Democracy and Governance .....	137
5.2.1	Civil Society.....	137
5.2.2	Justice and Governance.....	137
5.2.3	Media .....	138
5.2.4	Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).....	138
5.2.5	Countering Trafficking in Persons (CTIP).....	138
5.3	Health .....	139
5.3.1	Tuberculosis.....	139
6.	Recommendations .....	140
	Annex 1: Gender Analysis Domains .....	143
	Annex 2: Bibliography.....	145
	Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews .....	148

## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARGO	Civil Society Development Association
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTIP	Counter-Trafficking in Persons
CTJ	Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAR	Dignity and Rights
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DV	Domestic Violence
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uzbekistan
GSIA	Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JRUP	Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan Program
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
MSM	Men Who Have Sex With Men
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RDCS	Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TB	Tuberculosis
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WCU	Women's Committee of Uzbekistan

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uzbekistan has been on the path of rapid political reforms since 2016 including in the area of business, cooperation with international organizations and civil society legislation. Most significantly, for the first time in 20 years, the Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) is planning to adopt two draft laws that focus on equal opportunities for men and women<sup>298</sup> and addressing domestic violence (DV),<sup>299</sup> scheduled to be signed this autumn. In addition, the President of Uzbekistan issued decrees about strengthening the family and providing social benefits to vulnerable groups. These decrees, unfortunately, follow a rather conservative understanding of women's role as only within the family,<sup>300</sup> and of disability as a medical condition to be treated.<sup>301</sup> Strong civil society and ongoing dialogue between the government and civil society will be key in creating mechanisms for the use of these laws and their actual implementation. Due to severe restrictions on civil society organizing in the past, the number of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Uzbekistan is quite low per capita compared to other countries in the region.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation of women in Uzbekistan has worsened. This is especially evident in the areas of higher education<sup>302</sup> (current enrollment 38.2 percent for women and 61.8 percent for men) and labor force participation<sup>303</sup> (53.8 percent for women versus 77.7 percent for men). These issues are further exacerbated by gender stereotypes that permeate each sector of the government and society. Current government efforts, including the work of the Oila research center and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, to bridge gender-related gaps are focused on women's role within the family, and not female empowerment. The GoU focus on divorce prevention as a panacea for improving women's situations is particularly concerning and needs to be urgently addressed through providing alternative information, ideally through ongoing and meaningful engagement of CSOs working on women's rights.

Women's important roles in agriculture, water, and energy management are not recognized by Uzbek society. Women's lack of representation in the fields that are considered "non-traditional," such as agriculture, electricity, and water, contribute to a lack of understanding of how sector reforms and infrastructure development may negatively impact women.

Uzbekistan criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct between men, lagging behind three countries in the region which eliminated this outdated Soviet article of criminal codes in 1998. Due to rampant homophobia and transphobia in society, and institutionalized homophobia, the police continuously exploit the legal and social vulnerability of gay and bisexual men and transgender women to extort money and physically abuse them. Due to criminalization, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations are scared to raise lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) issues fearing repercussions from the government leaving this marginalized community without support and in a dire situation.

People with disabilities in Uzbekistan are perceived as in need of charity and medical treatment, not as increasing human diversity, which further stigmatizes them. The lack of basic accessible infrastructure makes organizing very challenging for people with disabilities. High levels of social stigma about disability contribute to families' lack of investment in their children with disabilities which results in low levels of education and high levels of unemployment in this community. It is most concerning that the government sees a decrease of the number of people with disabilities as a sign of success.

---

<sup>298</sup> The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Guarantees of the Equal Right and Opportunities for Men and Women." Last modified May 8, 2019. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3220>.

<sup>299</sup> The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3338>. The recommendation for development of domestic violence legislation was presented in that USAID/CA Gender Analysis conducted in 2009/2010.

<sup>300</sup> Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. "On Approval of the Concept of Strengthening the Institution of the Family in the Republic of Uzbekistan." Last modified June 29, 2018. <http://lex.uz/ru/docs/3797628>.

<sup>301</sup> Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. "On Measures to Radically Improve the System of State Support for Persons with Disabilities," December 4, 2017. <http://lex.uz/docs/3436196>.

<sup>302</sup> Asian Development Bank. *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*. Update. December 2018.

<sup>303</sup> ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.

Considering the new, seemingly more open political environment in Uzbekistan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is in a position to make substantial contributions to the country's inclusive development. Examples of recommendations on how to achieve this include:

#### Economic Growth

- Continue supporting women entrepreneurs in non-traditional fields, including technology, logistics, and horticulture.
- Provide skills and capacity-building programs that develop marketable and innovative skills for women and people with disabilities, and trafficking victims, rather than traditional sewing, bakery, and hairdressing.
- Ensure that activities do not perpetuate occupational segregation, *i.e.*, that women mostly work in services, medicine, and education, with men in technical occupations and decision-making.
- Undertake gender baseline analysis in the energy sector.
- Support media campaigns and awareness raising about women's role in integrated water resources management (IWRM).
- Support scholarships for women in IWRM.
- Use USAID's leverage with the government as a donor to coordinate efforts to create quotas for women in higher and professional education in the fields of energy, water management, business, and other fields that are currently male dominated.

#### Democracy and Governance

- Develop a stand-alone civil society capacity-building program that would empower organizations, initiative groups, and social media activists working in the areas of gender equality and social inclusion. This program should have a mechanism of providing funding to groups that are not registered and to individual influencers/bloggers.
- In work with LGBTI communities, focus on human rights and addressing stigma and discrimination, especially police violence and extortion; addressing these structural barriers will contribute to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention which remains the safest angle of engaging on LGBTI issues in the country.
- Continue to support engagement with e-governance and e-court initiatives. Ensure that these resources are accessible for people with disabilities, low Internet literacy, and slow Internet access.
- Use USAID's leverage as a donor to advocate for ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and through the Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan Program (JRUP) engage in providing relevant international and regional expertise and best implementation practices for the process.
- Provide extra support to programs that engage with social media and traditional media channels as a tool to eliminate stereotypes about gender, disability, HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and LGBTI issues.
- Include a countering violent extremism (CVE) component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking. Migrants are one of the most susceptible groups to CVE. Any service provision activity aimed at this group, and their families, should also discuss dangers of CVE, ways to identify if they are being recruited, and tips for how to protect themselves.
- Support the GoU's participation in regional efforts to address unregulated labor migration, which can lead to human rights abuses of labor migrants, including trafficking.

#### Health

- Invest in identifying further gender and social barriers for TB patients and develop programming to address these barriers. This programming can include providing income-generating opportunities for TB patients who are the sole breadwinners for their families to keep them in treatment and compensate for the loss of income and developing programming responsive to the needs of young women with TB who have children, *e.g.*, by providing shorter regimens and shorter hospital stays.

- Use existing program opportunities to address stigma and gender barriers associated with TB among medical professionals. This can be accomplished via information campaigns that dispel myths about TB that negatively affect women and provide further insights into economic and social benefits of completing TB treatment.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan country reports are the main building blocks for the overarching Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis (GSIA) report for USAID/Central Asia’s new Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy (RDCCS).

Country-level findings in these four reports demonstrate how men and women are faring in their respective countries, and what challenges they are facing, along with vulnerable groups that include people with disabilities; LGBTI persons; youth; and ethnic and religious minorities, where applicable. Gaps identified in these reports provide the basis for recommendations for USAID’s actions in each respective country. The findings in this report are presented sectorally, however additional presentation of findings through the lens of five domains of gender analysis is in Annex I.

## 3. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The GSIA team conducted a desk review of relevant documents (Annex 2) and conducted 18 key informant interviews with diverse stakeholders and one focus group discussion with implementing partners (IPs) in Tashkent (Annex 3). Results from the staff and IP GSIA survey were also taken into account in development of this report. Limitations included unavailability of respondents, as many were away on leave, which was also reflected in the low survey turnout rate. The team noted that presence of USAID staff in some interviews might have influenced the types of answers provided by the respondents, especially by the IPs. Although the team made it clear that the purpose of the interviews was not to evaluate their activities, the IPs would often, if USAID staff were present, focus on presenting their project’s gender-related accomplishments, rather than on providing more tailored answers to the questions asked. Without the presence of USAID staff, the respondents seemed more relaxed, and the conversations were able to flow in a more informal manner. Another key limitation in data collection was the lack of sex-disaggregated data across sectors, which makes it difficult to analyze gender disparities. National-level data is controlled by the GoU and is often kept confidential or manipulated for the appearance of “better” outcomes. The country is planning to conduct a population census in 2022.

## 4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 4.1 Gender Equality

The Uzbek constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all of its citizens. Presently, there are two gender equality pieces of legislation that are waiting to be approved and adopted—Gender Equality Law and Domestic Violence Law. In February 2018, President Mirziyoyev signed a decree which aims to “*fundamentally improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family.*”<sup>304</sup> Uzbekistan is also a signatory to key international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

**Table I: Gender Equality International Indices Rankings for Uzbekistan**

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Gender Development Index (GDI) (2018)	Male-female achievement ratio in: health; education; and command over economic resources. (Group 1 – high equality; group 2 – medium-high equality; group 3 – medium equality; group 4 – medium-low equality; group 5 countries – low equality)	0.945 (Group 3 – medium equality)

<sup>304</sup> Darina Solod. “In Uzbekistan, Women’s Rights are Changing – but Not Fast Enough,” Open Democracy, July 4, 2018. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/uzbekistan-gender-inequality-violence-en/>.

Indicator	What Does It Measure?	Ranking
UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2018)	Five indicators: maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rate, seats in the national Parliament, population with at least secondary education, and labor force participation. Measurement is between 0 and 1. The higher the GII value, the more disparities between females and males.	0.274
Note: Lack of available sex-disaggregated data does not allow for ranking of Uzbekistan for: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (2019); World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (2018) (GGGI); and Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index (2019)		

The country's gender machinery is spearheaded by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan (WCU), which is chaired by the deputy prime minister. The above-mentioned Presidential decree encourages the WCU to apply systematic approaches to gender mainstreaming. WCU has identified employment, job creation, and development of business and entrepreneurship skills as key issues for urban women, and for rural women, the priorities are lack of social and municipal infrastructure, and the need for family- and home-based business development.<sup>305</sup> Current investments by several international organizations support WCU as the main player in gender equality efforts. While WCU has a large outreach present all over the country through the system of *mahallas* (local neighborhood self-governing bodies, often supported by the state), their focus is mainly on the traditional role of women within the family. This focus limits the WCU's role in addressing larger social barriers that exist for girls and women in Uzbekistan, such as lack of education and employment opportunities that are exacerbated by traditional family expectations, as well as affecting change at the policy level.

Together with Oila research center, WCU administers social housing for people with disabilities and divorced women and their children. Both organizations focus on strengthening family and provide social services including mediation to prevent divorce and life-skills courses for young people who plan to get married. Both of these organizations are likely in the future to make up the government's gender machinery as recommended by the United Nations (UN) CEDAW Committee.<sup>306</sup> Providing investments for developing relevant legislation, action plans and mechanisms to implement this legislation, is key for strengthening the work on gender equality in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan's divorce<sup>307</sup> laws which require payment of hefty amounts for the procedure and undergoing mandatory reconciliation with religious leaders and neighbors make it very challenging for women to leave an abusive marriage while the government is investing and prioritizing divorce prevention and reconciliation.<sup>308</sup> Civil society groups report suicides and murders of women who were unable to leave violent marriages.<sup>309</sup>

<sup>305</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>306</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Uzbekistan (2015)*. <http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkGldpercent2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsvglKmpersent2f71O4iogAZSMgYVYuYufaY2pk19b3QRebuls32UC4BM7j37kYXIVKMUBKJ70MTPBIBr2fBnHtgDIC5QijmBJS3tu72g8bigsp percent2bfmry>. "The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Strengthen the Women's Committee by transforming it into an effective and genuine part of the State machinery for the advancement of women with the status, authority and human, technical and financial resources necessary to effectively promote the implementation of the Convention and enhance coordination between the Women's Committee and government agencies; (b) Use the Convention as the legal framework for the design of a comprehensive national plan of action to promote gender equality and put in place monitoring mechanisms to regularly assess the progress made towards the achievement of the goals established in the plan."

"The Committee urges the State party: (a) To carry out, within a clear time frame, a comprehensive legislative review and adopt new legislation in order to bring its national law into line with the provisions of the Convention; (b) To accelerate the adoption of the bill on equal rights and opportunities for men and women and the bill on violence in the family and ensure that they fully comply with the Convention."

<sup>307</sup> See, for example, Decree: Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan. "On the Practice of Application by Courts of Divorce Laws," Last modified Nov 30, 2018. <http://www.lex.uz/acts/2414116>.

<sup>308</sup> Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>309</sup> See for example, Babajan, Khurmat. "Family of Killed Uzbek Woman Blame Officials For Not Letting Her Divorce 'Abusive Husband.'" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. July 13, 2019. Last accessed August 10, 2019. <https://www.rferl.org/a/family-of-killed-uzbek-woman-blame-officials-for-not-letting-her-divorce-abusive-husband-/30052762.html>.

In addition to the existing legal framework, it is important to emphasize the extent to which gender stereotypes affect the lives of Uzbek women and men. Stereotypes about women's behavior and social roles affect educational and professional choices for both sexes. Families are often quite influential in women's educational choices; preferences are for women to study education or health, so that they can educate their children or provide professional care of her family members. Families also prefer that women work in an environment that is dominated by other women, and with a shorter workday, so that they have enough time to take care of their home obligations. When it comes to home ownership, as traditional main breadwinners and heads of households, men's names are used for registering property, as a sign of respect from the women.<sup>310</sup>

## 4.2 LGBTI

Uzbekistan is one of the two remaining countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region that continue to criminalize consensual same-sex conduct between men with a maximum prison sentence of three years.<sup>311</sup> The extent of the application of this law is unknown, yet according to informants, it creates a climate of impunity for police who extort money from LGBTI people in exchange for not starting criminal proceedings.<sup>312</sup>

High levels of stigma and criminalization of LGBTI individuals, along with other key populations including sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM), and drug users, makes HIV services less accessible for these groups.<sup>313</sup> For example, there were reports that hospital wards marked personal medical records of HIV-positive men who have sex with men as "homosexual" and sent them to the police.<sup>314</sup> According to NGO informants, current programming for MSM is mostly limited to condom distribution, sexually transmitted infection (STI) information materials dissemination, and referral for HIV testing. While this support is crucial, it does not address stigma and discrimination. Lack of reliable public health data remains a concern for HIV prevention, diagnosis, and treatment in Uzbekistan.<sup>315</sup>

## 4.3 People With Disabilities

Uzbekistan has an extensive legislation<sup>316</sup> regarding the social protection of persons with disabilities. However, as mentioned by informants, official registration of persons with disabilities has many flaws and the reported numbers are considerably lower than international averages. Uzbekistan remains one of the two countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that did not ratify the CRPD.

The society in Uzbekistan perceives the persons with disabilities as needing constant external help for the activities of daily living; continuously dependent on medical intervention; who cannot be educated; and have the least potential for marriage and employment.<sup>317</sup> People with disabilities in Uzbekistan experience high levels of stigma and discrimination at various levels of society including their own families. A disability NGO informant described how her mobility is limited by her family's control and lack of accessible environment and transportation for her to be able to move around the city.

When presented with economic choices, families are least likely to invest in education of their daughters with disabilities, further limiting employment opportunities for women with disabilities. Disability rights activists estimated levels of unemployment as high as 90 percent, with 70 percent of people with disabilities living below the poverty line.<sup>318</sup> It is particularly worrying that the official number of persons with disabilities is decreasing, which fits the medical model of perception of disability in Uzbekistan. State

---

<sup>310</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>311</sup> Article 120 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan, [http://fmc.uz/legisl.php?id=k\\_ug\\_21](http://fmc.uz/legisl.php?id=k_ug_21).

<sup>312</sup> After the Padishah: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Uzbekistan (Equal Rights Trust, 2016), 235-236.

<sup>313</sup> "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018: Uzbekistan." United States (U.S.) Embassy in Uzbekistan. March 14, 2019. Last accessed August 10, 2019. <https://uz.usembassy.gov/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices-for-2018-uzbekistan/>.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> UNAIDS, *Country Factsheet Uzbekistan*, 2018, <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/uzbekistan>.

<sup>316</sup> For example, see Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. "On the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities," Last modified December 4, 2004. <http://www.lex.uz/acts/140860>.

<sup>317</sup> Mirjahan Turdiev. Changing traditions by following traditions: Disability inclusive development in Uzbekistan, 2015.

<sup>318</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Uzbekistan Human Rights Report*, 2018.



commissions that assess individual's level of disability to receive social benefits, pose more stringent criteria and deny benefits in an effort to decrease expenditures and show percentage of "cures."<sup>319</sup>

#### 4.4 Youth

Due to rapid demographic growth, 64 percent of the Uzbek population is under 30.<sup>320</sup> The system of higher and professional education is not able to keep up with growing numbers of young people. Enhancement of the State Youth Policy is one of the key priorities of the Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2017-2021<sup>321</sup> yet, as noted by informants, due to high levels of corruption in the education sector, implementation of this policy is likely to be challenging. The policy founded the Union of Youth of Uzbekistan, whose goal is to "increase the role of youth in politics and help protect them from destructive forces,"<sup>322</sup> as well as to protect youth against radicalization.

#### 4.5 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The anti-violence legal framework in Uzbekistan is weak and, as mentioned previously, the Domestic Violence Law is yet to be passed.

As is the case in the rest of the region, GBV in Uzbekistan is considered a private family matter. The victims, usually women, are discouraged from reporting the incidences, as it would show poorly on them and ruin their reputation. DV cases most frequently end up mediated by the *mahalla*, for whom the preferred outcome is reconciliation. If the victim does report the incident to the law enforcement due to extreme abuse, the officers handling the case usually have no training on dealing with these types of crimes, and often encouraging the victim to drop the case.

Since this topic is not widely discussed, or actively addressed by the government, there are no data on GBV prevalence, or prevention and response. There are DV shelters around the country, managed by WCU, some of which are supported by UNDP. In addition, the United States (U.S.) Embassy supports three NGO-run shelters.

### 5. FINDINGS BY SECTOR

This section presents gender and social inclusion findings in the sectors and subsectors in which USAID/CA is active in Uzbekistan. They include: 1) Economic Growth (Trade and Markets, Energy, Water); 2) Democracy and Governance (Civil Society, Justice and Governance, Media, CVE, Countering Trafficking in Persons [CTIP]); and 3) Health (TB).

#### 5.1 Economic Growth

##### 5.1.1 Trade and Markets

Labor force participation in Uzbekistan is 53.8 percent for women and 77.7 percent for men.<sup>323</sup> As in other countries in the region, there is occupational sex disaggregation, with women in lower-paying fields (education, health care, social services, accommodation, catering) and men in more profitable sectors (construction, industry, transport, communications, information technology [IT]). In addition to full time employment, gender roles dictate that women should also be in charge of child rearing and home-related obligations. These obligations, however, act as a deterrent for a woman interested in obtaining formal employment or starting a business.

The GoU is committed to small and medium enterprise (SME) development, which is the leading national employer. In 2016, it provided 78.2 percent of all jobs in the formal labor market. Furthermore, SMEs were responsible for generating 46 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the first half of 2017; and accounted for over 16,000 new small businesses, among which 42.3 percent were

<sup>319</sup> For example, see Dilmurad Yusupov. "Invisible People." *Gazeta.UZ*. January 23, 2019. Last accessed August 10, 2019. <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/11/29/statistics/>.

<sup>320</sup> ADB. *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment. Update*. December 2018.

<sup>321</sup> "Youth Is a Great Power That Ensures Economic Growth in the Country." The National Human Rights Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan. August 13, 2018. [http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek\\_news/8099/](http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek_news/8099/).

<sup>322</sup> Yeniseyev, Maksim. "Uzbekistan Launches Youth Policy to Fight Terrorism, Foster Opportunities." *Caravanserai*. July 27, 2017. [http://central.asia-news.com/en\\_GB/articles/cnmi\\_ca/features/2017/07/27/feature-01](http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/07/27/feature-01).

<sup>323</sup> ESCAP. *Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA Countries*, 2018.



women-headed.<sup>324</sup> While there are no legal obstacles for female entrepreneurship, their lack of skills in finance and management means that they are primarily involved with microenterprises, which limits their activities and earning potential. In addition, lack of collateral is an obstacle for women interested in obtaining a business loan. Currently, property owned by women composes only 22.3 percent of all property registered with the National Agency on Land and Property Cadastre.<sup>325</sup> Moreover, real estate is commonly registered under men's names especially in the rural areas.<sup>326</sup> According to informants, this situation is especially challenging for women whose husbands or mothers-in-law do not support their business initiatives. Culturally, it is frowned upon for women to prioritize their own development, including starting their own business or getting a new profession or education, over family obligations.<sup>327</sup> When women are able to start businesses, they usually lead in services (34 percent), trade (16 percent), non-food production (16 percent), food production (9 percent), agricultural farms (5 percent), and other spheres (21 percent).<sup>328</sup> By only providing professional training for women in baking, sewing, and hairdressing, existing programs are perpetuating these divisions. These skills generate less income than more technical skills and keep women in lower-paying jobs. One informant mentioned that technical colleges and universities in Uzbekistan sometimes do not even have dormitories for women, which discourages their enrollment further. A number of informants stressed that there is a lack of understanding of social and economic consequences of limiting girls' and women's educational and professional opportunities.

USAID/CA's regional Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs (CTJ) Activity supports future female entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan through an innovative Technovation Challenge, which brings together technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Technovation is the largest technology entrepreneurship competition for girls aged 10-18, especially from the most vulnerable regions of the country. In partnership with Google it offers girls around the world the opportunity to learn the skills they need to emerge as tech entrepreneurs and leaders. Through the 100-hour Technovation program, girls identify a problem in their community, develop a mobile app and launch a startup that addresses that problem. Entrepreneurial and IT skills create opportunities for more jobs. The events are co-organized by Technovation Platform in Uzbekistan in partnership with the Uzbek Women's Committee under the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Information Technology, Ministry for Innovation Development, and higher academic institutions like the Tashkent Institute of Information Technologies, Center for High Technologies, and Korean INHA University in Tashkent. The Technovation in Uzbekistan is a nation-wide contest endorsed by the Uzbek Government at the Deputy Prime Minister level. The Activity is also supported by USAID, CTJ, and Women in Tech Week events contain sessions on innovation, women entrepreneurship, leadership, design thinking, and the startup mix conference. The events are regularly facilitated by women mentors from Silicon Valley, impact advisors, and entrepreneurs from the United States.<sup>329</sup> Investment in alternative, non-traditional paths for female entrepreneurship is a necessary step to address gender stereotypes and educational and occupational segregation.

Other donors, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), work with local banks to provide microloans to women's businesses. For example, ADB's Second Small and Microfinance Development Project – Phase II created 21,968 jobs with the help of sub-loans, 37 percent of which were filled by women. Ipak Yuli Bank and Hamkor Bank issued 4,152 microfinance loans and 502 small business loans, 31.2 percent of which were received by rural women's micro, small, and medium businesses.<sup>330</sup>

### 5.1.2 Energy

In the field of energy, stereotypes about women's physical strength and level of technical knowledge contributed to the lowest representation of women out of all programmatic sectors. For example, at the largest electricity provider Uzbekenergo women constitute only 17 percent of employees.<sup>331</sup> The time

---

<sup>324</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>325</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*, 15.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>327</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*, 64.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>329</sup> USAID, Integrating Gender: USAID Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Activity in Central Asia, 2019.

<sup>330</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI.

that women use on fulfilling their traditional family duties is largely dependent on availability of stable use of electricity. When there are shortages in electricity supply, women have less control over the time that it takes to wash clothes, bathe their children, and cook meals.<sup>332</sup> Existing USAID programming covers technical and regulatory levels to create one energy market in Central Asia, yet the impact of this work on women in Uzbekistan needs to be better researched.

Current positive examples of addressing stereotypes in the energy sector include ADB's efforts to cooperate with the Ministry of Education to establish quotas for women in technical universities within energy departments<sup>333</sup> and building infrastructure at a power plant that would enable women to be more involved, *i.e.*, hiring women as controllers in their localities, providing childcare, and building separate showers and bathrooms.<sup>334</sup>

### 5.1.3 Water

Water shortages and lack of water infrastructure impact women in Uzbekistan directly. For example, women spend 22 hours a month on average to deliver water. Further water processing includes boiling it for safe drinking, warming water for washing of each family member, and laundry.<sup>335</sup> In rural areas women mostly do their laundry by hand due to water and electricity shortages which limits their time and availability for gainful employment or owning a business.<sup>336</sup> Women represent between 5-10 percent of employees at state water management institutions and usually occupy lower-paid junior roles.<sup>337</sup>

USAID's Smart Waters program aims at building a cadre of professionals capable of managing shared water resources in Central Asia and Afghanistan. It focuses on connecting policy-level water management discussions with practical implications of water use. As main managers of water in their households and communities, women should be a valuable asset to Smart Waters programming and their capacity should be developed to be more engaged in water management at professional level. ADB showed that by improving water infrastructure in the Surhandarya region, they were able to free up to three working days a month for local women who no longer had to spend long hours collecting water and using it for various domestic needs.<sup>338</sup> Additionally, the project contributed to improved health outcomes, especially for children who now had regular access to clean water for drinking and washing.<sup>339</sup> The project also contributed to reducing local conflicts over water because farmers no longer had to spend time in long lines waiting for water.<sup>340</sup>

---

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-29.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

## 5.2 Democracy and Governance

### 5.2.1 Civil Society

Civil society in Uzbekistan is quite weak due to lack of opportunities to work openly before 2016. Informants report issues with registration and fear of reprisal for their work. For example, one disability rights organization spent two years applying for registration before finally being able to receive it through contacting the office of the President via the e-governance portal. New laws and simplified registration procedures create new opportunities for the work of NGOs. However, a standalone program for their capacity-building needs to be in place in order to create meaningful change. It is key to include various civil society voices, including people with disabilities; youth, especially girls and young women; LGBTI people; and social media activists in current capacity building efforts.

USAID is supporting development of Uzbek civil society through its regional activity Partnership for Innovation, implemented by the Civil Society Development Association (ARGO), in cooperation with partner CSOs. The activity goal is to strengthen civil society in Central Asia to influence their respective government on all aspects of local, national, and regional debate and policymaking, representing the voices of their beneficiaries and constituents. This will be accomplished by 1) improving the enabling environment for public participation, and 2) increasing the capacity of CSOs to be competent and effective in advocacy and collaboration to advance policy, service delivery, and legal/regulatory agendas.

### 5.2.2 Justice and Governance

In an effort to become more accessible to ordinary citizens, the government introduced e-governance and e-court systems. Many informants mentioned that the system of e-governance strengthened access to the government including the registration of businesses and civil society groups, applying to courts for various matters, and social benefits. Additionally, in 2017, the GoU established a Virtual Reception office in each administrative locality through which the citizens can send inquiries directly to the government.

The WCU addresses women's appeals, which include inquiries about receiving legal, social, and housing assistance and financial aid, as well as questions on cultural behavior, dress codes, weddings, and rituals.<sup>341</sup>

E-governance and e-court systems created new opportunities for dialogue between the government and the population. These systems are especially important for women who have less mobility due to time consumed by family obligations and stricter control of their movement. In addition, e-governance provides anonymity, which is an important fact for women, who may, due to social pressure, be discouraged or embarrassed from going to court, especially when a case of DV is in question. In fact, the number of cases filed by women has increased as a result of e-governance.<sup>342</sup> Currently e-governance systems are only accessible to people who have access to a computer and stable Internet connection. There is 75 percent Internet penetration in Uzbekistan.<sup>343</sup>

In regard to women's representation in justice administration and delivery, in 2017, only about 25 percent of judges were female, although that number did increase towards the end of the year. Women are less likely to choose a career as a judge due to the position's time commitment which interferes with home obligations. As a result, there is a lack of female role models holding this position.<sup>344</sup> Even though there has been the 30 percent quota for women in political parties' lists of candidates since 2004, the proportion of women in Parliament remains low, at 16 percent in 2017. Low participation of women is also evident in decision-making positions at the local level. In 2017, all *hokims* (mayors) in 14 regions and in the city of Tashkent were male. Only 16.67 percent (14 out of 84) deputy *hokims* of *viloyat* (regions) were female, mostly for women's issues. Similarly, at the district level, women accounted for 193 out of 1,772 deputy district *hokims* (25 percent) in 2017.<sup>345</sup>

Current USAID support for JRUP has brought a number of successes by engaging international and regional experts in technical expertise of developing Uzbekistan's justice system including e-governance

---

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> FGD with IPs, July 8, 2019.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> ADB, 2018 *op cit*.

and new gender machinery legislation. It also supports, through a grant, provision of free legal aid to vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and migrants. Another USAID supported activity, Rule of Law Partnership in Uzbekistan, works on improving the Uzbek legal system by strengthening public access to courts and increasing judicial competency.

### 5.2.3 Media

Media freedom in Uzbekistan continues to be limited.<sup>346</sup> Access to social media including social networks and various messengers, remains a popular means of getting information, especially among young people. With USAID's support, Internews Network involves bloggers and social media activists from Uzbekistan in its programming to build their capacity to create quality content and improve the population's media literacy. UNDP has supported female bloggers via their Women's Empowerment Project. As with many other countries in the region, local language content is lacking in social media channels and this area of work needs to be strengthened.

Through social media channels, such as NeMolchi.UZ, a wide variety of women's voices, including young women who are culturally the most disempowered, are able to discuss issues relevant to their lives and find long-lasting solutions. These channels also provide feedback to WCU about their legislative initiatives and provide opportunities to engage in dialogue. Ideally, this dialogue could help frame WCU work through the lens of girls' and women's needs as their main constituency, not through political decrees. This kind of dialogue is a new development for Uzbekistan and needs to be scaled up. NeMolchi.UZ is a Russian-language resource that may not be accessible to girls and women in rural areas. By collecting women's stories of being survivors of family violence, NeMolchi.UZ can serve as a channel for connecting their audiences with relevant social services and government resources.

In terms of traditional media, there are primetime television shows aimed at raising women's awareness of their rights.<sup>347</sup>

### 5.2.4 Countering Violent Extremism

Many informants indicated that the government is not capable of accommodating the growing number of young people. According to informants, due to high levels of corruption at universities, low numbers of young people are able to enroll in higher education which further limits their professional opportunities. On average, about 500, 000 students graduate from high school annually; however, due to an overall low number of higher education institutions in the country, only about 10-12 percent are admitted.

Over 2.5 million people from Uzbekistan are migrating to Russia and Kazakhstan seeking work.<sup>348</sup> There they are living in poor conditions and are more susceptible to recruiters from extremist organizations.<sup>349</sup>

### 5.2.5 Countering Trafficking in Persons

An important difference for trafficking in persons and forced labor between the 2010 assessment and now is that the most affected group constitutes men who take up low-skilled jobs in Kazakhstan and Russia.<sup>350</sup> Their passports may be taken away, and they may be locked up inside the construction site where they are working long hours in very basic and often unsanitary conditions. According to NGO informants, due to patriarchal views that men cannot be victims of trafficking, they are less likely to access available programs of support. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Central Asia has been focusing on providing support for men who are victims of trafficking and forced labor, but their clients are only a fraction of the numbers of persons who are trafficked out of Uzbekistan.<sup>351</sup>

NGO Istikbolli Avlod manages a hotline for victims of trafficking. They report that about 20-30 percent of the calls they receive are regarding trafficking cases, while the rest include legal inquiries, or other types

---

<sup>346</sup> "Uzbekistan." Freedom in the World 2019. March 11, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/uzbekistan>.

<sup>347</sup> Interview with UNFPA, July 12, 2019.

<sup>348</sup> U.S. Mission Uzbekistan, "2018 Trafficking in Persons Report: Uzbekistan." U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan. July 9, 2018. <https://uz.usembassy.gov/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report-uzbekistan/>.

<sup>349</sup> Mohammed S. Elshimi, Raffaello Pantucci, Sarah Lain, and Nadine L. Salman. "Understanding the Factors Contributing to Radicalisation Among Central Asian Labour Migrants in Russia," RUSI Occasional Paper, April 2018.

<sup>350</sup> U.S. Mission Uzbekistan, 2018 *op cit*.

<sup>351</sup> U.S. Mission Uzbekistan, 2018 *op cit*.

of questions related to migration—for example, what to do when they lose their documents in Russia. The NGO also provides courses for trafficked migrants with the support of the U.S. Embassy. Women are trained in cutting hair, baking, and computer literacy, while men are offered photography and design courses, and repair skills. Most of these cases are male victims of forced labor in Kazakhstan and Russia; there are fewer sexual exploitation cases.<sup>352</sup>

Labor migration contributes to changing power relations and family hierarchies, young people are exposed to diverse views and become more independent, seeking more autonomy in choosing spouses and using their incomes.<sup>353</sup> NGO informants mentioned that young men may stay in Russia or Kazakhstan, leaving their wives, children, and parents behind. Further research into the impact of labor migration on family dynamics and its gendered nature<sup>354</sup> can provide insights into developing relevant programming that could support autonomy, investment in education, and professional training for young women. IOM is currently finalizing research, in collaboration with WCU, on the needs of returning migrants, with focus on female migrants. Preliminary research results indicate that most female migrants are responsible for bringing up their children and families, are single mothers, or divorced.<sup>355</sup>

USAID, through its Dignity and Rights (DAR) program, implemented by IOM, has been working on CTIP since 2015. Examples of activities include capacity-building of NGOs; and supporting public information campaigns on raising local population's awareness of trafficking.

Due to unregulated migration, current environment in Kazakhstan offers no legal protection for Uzbek migrants. They are required to register after five days in the country, compared to Tajik and Kyrgyz citizens who have 30 days for registration. They are also not entitled to free government-funded services in Kazakhstan, including TB and HIV treatments, staying in state shelters for victims of trafficking, or participating in income-generating opportunities. This issue requires collaboration between the two governments so that migration conditions for Uzbek labor migrants to Kazakhstan can be improved.

### 5.3 Health

#### 5.3.1 Tuberculosis

According to NGO and key IP informants, many stereotypes surround TB in Uzbekistan, partially due to historical isolation of TB patients in special hospitals and lack of public information about its causes and treatments. Long-term treatment regimens and isolation of TB patients into hospitals creates further obstacles for women who are not able to leave their family duties in accessing TB treatment. Informants mentioned that women with TB experience high levels of stigma and their families are more likely to hide this diagnosis and treatment from extended family and the neighborhood worrying about potential social consequences for the woman and her family.

USAID-funded project HOPE works on prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of TB. The project is able to operate and provides various services for patients, including social services in coordination with local governments. According to informants, the success of the project is challenging to quantify because of government restrictions on public health data. The project focuses on providing accessible TB services to vulnerable groups including migrants. The informants noted that men who are traditionally seen as the sole breadwinners for their families, are less likely to finish long-term treatment if they are pressured by their family to return to Russia or Kazakhstan to continue earning money. Further research is needed into social barriers and the gendered nature of these barriers for effective TB diagnosis and treatment.

Through the Challenge TB project USAID is funding training for medical professionals about new treatment regimens and approaches to diagnosing and treating TB. These efforts can include sessions on gender, stigma, and discrimination in order for medical professionals to understand social determinants in accessing treatments and develop tailored interventions for patients whose family and life situations may not allow them to receive long-term in-patient treatments.

---

<sup>352</sup> Interview with Istikbolli Avlod, July 9, 2019.

<sup>353</sup> Haruka Kikuta. 2019. "Mobile phones and self-determination among Muslim youth in Uzbekistan." *Central Asian Survey*, 38 (2): 181-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2019.1584603>.

<sup>354</sup> ESCAP, 2018 *op cit.*, 12.

<sup>355</sup> Interview with IOM, July 11, 2019.

Current public awareness campaigns mostly cover medical information about TB symptoms and treatment but do not address cultural myths about TB and the social consequences of these myths.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to these country-specific recommendations, the main report contains additional recommendations applicable to all country offices. It should be noted that donor coordination is beneficial in accomplishing many of the recommendations below. Uzbekistan Country Office should join the UN Gender Thematic Group to learn about other donors' activities and develop joint or complementary initiatives.

### **Economic Growth**

#### Trade and Markets

- Continue supporting women entrepreneurs in non-traditional fields, including technology, logistics, and horticulture.
- Provide skills and capacity-building programs that build marketable and innovative skills for women and people with disabilities, and trafficking victims, rather than traditional sewing, bakery, and hairdressing.
- Provide scholarships for girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).
- Support programming that challenges gender stereotypes in women's participation in agriculture (value chains). Include gender perspective as one of useful innovations similarly to other innovative solutions that agriculture activities are introducing, such as renewable energy or new ways of sorting fruit or growing crops.
- Ensure that activities do not perpetuate occupational segregation, *i.e.*, that women mostly work in services, medicine, and education and men in technical occupations and decision-making.

#### Energy

- Undertake gender baseline analysis in the energy sector. The analysis should look at both 1) access to energy, and 2) energy delivery.
- Explore ways to get involved with organizational gender mainstreaming at Uzbekenergo. An example of a very successful United States Government (USG) program that strengthens energy sector operations by identifying and implementing gender equality best practices while helping utilities meet their core business goals is Engendering Utilities.<sup>356</sup>

#### Water

- Undertake gender baseline analysis in the water sector.
- Support media campaigns and awareness raising about women's role in IWRM.
- Support scholarships for women in IWRM.
- Use USAID's leverage with the government as a donor to coordinate efforts to create quotas for women in higher and professional education in the fields of energy, water management, business, and other fields that are currently male dominated.

### **Democracy and Governance**

#### Civil Society

- Develop a stand-alone civil society capacity-building program that would empower organizations, initiative groups, and social media activists working in the areas of gender equality and social inclusion; this program should have a mechanism of providing funding to groups that are not registered and to individual influencers/bloggers.
- Use local and Central Asia trainers to build capacity of civil society groups.
- Encourage the government to recruit civil society into the gender machinery development process as part of state-civil society dialogue.

---

<sup>356</sup> USAID, "About: Engendering Utilities," July 1, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/energy/engendering-utilities/about>.

- In work with LGBTI communities, focus on human rights and addressing stigma and discrimination, especially police violence and extortion; addressing these structural barriers will contribute to HIV prevention which remains the safest angle of engaging on LGBTI issues in the country.

#### Justice and Governance

- Through JRUP's engagement in legal reform, explore opportunities for eliminating Article 120, which criminalizes same-sex conduct, from the criminal code, as most countries in the region have done in 1998.
- Continue to support engagement with e-governance and e-court initiatives. Ensure that these resources are accessible for people with disabilities, low Internet literacy, and slow Internet access.
- Use USAID's leverage as a donor to advocate for ratification of CRPD, and through JRUP engage in providing relevant international and regional expertise and best implementation practices for the process.
- Use USAID's leverage as a donor to advocate for development of strong gender machinery that prioritizes empowerment of girls and women and has a strong civil society oversight mechanism.
- Conduct a baseline survey on barriers and opportunities to women's political and public participation.

#### Media

- Provide extra support to programs that engage with both social media and traditional media channels as a tool to eliminate stereotypes about gender, disability, HIV, TB, and LGBTI issues.
- To reach and engage young people continue and scale up programming that provides support to social media initiatives specifically that engage on the issues of gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights with a focus on creating content in Uzbek language.

#### CVE

- Support the Union of Youth of Uzbekistan in its agenda to counter radicalization.
- Include a CVE component in any activities with migrants and victims of labor trafficking. Migrants are one of the most susceptible groups to CVE. Any service provision activity aimed at this group, and their families, should also discuss dangers of CVE, ways to identify if they are being recruited, and tips for how to protect themselves.

#### CTIP

- Continue to support provision of information services for outgoing labor migrants and their families based on their needs.
- Support the GoU's participation in regional efforts to address unregulated labor migration, which can lead to human rights abuses of labor migrants, including trafficking.



## Health

### Tuberculosis

- Use USAID leverage as a donor to engage in further dialogue with the government of Uzbekistan about the importance of reliable health data for better treatment outcomes in TB and HIV. Use data collected through the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) as a model.
- Invest in identifying further gender and social barriers for TB patients and develop programming to address these barriers. This programming can include providing income-generating opportunities for TB patients who are the sole breadwinners for their families to keep them in treatment and compensate for the loss of income and developing programming responsive to the needs of young women with TB who have children, for example, by providing shorter regimens and shorter hospital stays.
- Use existing program opportunities to address stigma and gender barriers associated with TB among medical professionals. This can be accomplished via information campaigns that dispel myths about TB that negatively affect women and provide further insights into economic and social benefits of completing TB treatment.
- Advocate to reform the way funding is distributed to clinics to avoid over-hospitalization. This would mean a change from funding based on the number of beds to the number of successfully treated TB patients.
- Use USAID leverage to mandate gender inclusion in national HIV and TB strategies, as Uzbekistan government donor.



## Annex I: Gender Analysis Domains

### I. Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices

The Uzbek constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all of its citizens. Presently, there are two gender equality pieces of legislation that are waiting to be approved and adopted—Gender Equality Law and Domestic Violence Law. In February 2018, President Mirziyoyev signed a decree which aims to “*fundamentally improve support for women and strengthen the institution of the family.*” Uzbekistan is also a signatory to key international human rights treaties, including the CEDAW.

The country’s gender machinery is spearhead by the WCU, which is chaired by the deputy prime minister. The above-mentioned Presidential decree encourages the WCU to apply systematic approaches to gender mainstreaming. WCU has identified employment, job creation, and development of business and entrepreneurship skills as key issues for urban women, and for rural women, the priorities are a lack of social and municipal infrastructure, and the need for family- and home-based business development. Current investments by several international organizations support WCU as the main player in gender equality efforts. While WCU has a large outreach being present all over the country through the system of *mahallas* (local neighborhood self-governing bodies, often supported by the state), their focus is mainly on the traditional role of women within the family. This focus limits WCU role in addressing larger social barriers that exist for girls and women in Uzbekistan, such as the lack of education and employment opportunities that are exacerbated by traditional family expectations, as well as affecting change at the policy level.

Together with Oila research center, WCU administers social housing for people with disabilities and divorced women and their children. Both organizations focus on strengthening family and provide social services including mediation to prevent divorce and life-skills courses for young people who plan to get married. Both of these organizations are likely in the future to make up the government’s gender machinery as recommended by the UN CEDAW Committee. Uzbekistan’s divorce laws which require payment of hefty amounts for the procedure and undergoing mandatory reconciliation with religious leaders and neighbors make it very challenging for women to leave an abusive marriage while the government is investing and prioritizing divorce prevention and reconciliation.

The anti-violence legal framework in Uzbekistan is weak and the Domestic Violence Law is yet to be passed. DV cases most frequently end up mediated by the *mahalla*, for whom the preferred outcome is reconciliation. If the victim does report the incident to the law enforcement due to extreme abuse, the officers handling the case usually have no training on dealing with these types of crimes, and often encourage the victim to drop the case. Since this topic is not widely discussed, or actively addressed by the government, there are no data on GBV prevalence, or prevention and response. There are domestic violence shelters around the country, managed by WCU, some of which are supported by UNDP. In addition, the U.S. Embassy supports three NGO-run shelters.

Uzbekistan is one of the two remaining countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region that continue to criminalize consensual same-sex conduct between men with a maximum prison sentence of three years. The extent of the application of this law is unknown, yet according to informants, it creates a climate of impunity for police who extort money from LGBTI people in exchange for not starting criminal proceedings.

Uzbekistan has extensive legislation regarding the social protection of persons with disabilities. However, as mentioned by informants, official registration of persons with disabilities has many flaws and the reported numbers are considerably lower than international averages. Uzbekistan remains one of the two countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that did not ratify the CRPD.

Enhancement of the state youth policy is one of the key priorities of the Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2017-2021<sup>357</sup> yet as noted by informants, due to high levels of corruption in educational, implementation of this policy is likely to be challenging. The policy founded the Union of Youth of Uzbekistan, whose goal

---

<sup>357</sup> “Youth is a Great Power,” 2018 *op cit*.

is to “increase the role of youth in politics and help protect them from destructive forces,”<sup>358</sup> as well as to protect youth against radicalization.

## **II. Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

Gender stereotypes affect the lives of Uzbek women and men. Stereotypes about women’s behavior and social roles affect educational and professional choices for both sexes. Families are often quite influential in women’s educational choices; preferences are for women to study education or health, so that they can educate their children or provide professional care of her family members. Families also prefer that women work in an environment that is dominated by other women, and with a shorter workday, so that they have enough time to take care of their home obligations. When it comes to home ownership, as traditional main breadwinners and heads of households, men’s names are used for registering property, as a sign of respect from the women. Women interested starting their own business do better if they have their husband’s or mothers-in-law support. Culturally, it is frowned upon for women to prioritize their own development, including starting their own business or getting a new profession or education, over family obligations. In the field of energy, stereotypes about women’s physical strength and level of technical knowledge contributed to lowest representation of women out of all programmatic sectors.

As is the case in the rest of the region, gender-based violence in Uzbekistan is considered a private family matter. The victims, usually women, are discouraged from reporting the incidences, as it would show poorly on them and ruin their reputation.

The society in Uzbekistan perceives persons with disabilities as needing constant external help for the activities of daily living, continuously dependent on medical intervention, who cannot be educated, and have the least potential for marriage and employment. People with disabilities in Uzbekistan experience high levels of stigma and discrimination at various levels of society including their own families. One disability NGO informant described how her mobility is limited by her family’s control and lack of accessible environment and transportation for her to be able to move around the city.

There are many stereotypes that surround TB in Uzbekistan, partially due to historical isolation of TB patients in special hospitals and lack of public information about its causes and treatments. Long-term treatment regimens and isolation of TB patients into hospitals creates further obstacles for women who are not able to leave their family duties in accessing TB treatment. Informants mentioned that women with TB experience high levels of stigma and their families are more likely to hide this diagnosis and treatment from extended family and the neighborhood, worrying about potential social consequences for the woman and her family.

## **III. Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use**

In addition to full time employment, gender roles dictate that women should also be in charge of child rearing and home-related obligations. These obligations, however, act as a deterrent for a woman interested in obtaining formal employment or starting a business.

The time that women use fulfilling their traditional family duties is largely dependent on availability of stable electricity. When there are shortages in electricity supply, women have less control over the time that it takes to wash clothes, bathe their children, and cook meals. Further water processing includes boiling it for safe drinking, warming water for washing of each family member, and laundry. In rural areas women mostly do laundry by hand due to water and electricity shortages which limits their time and availability for gainful employment or owning a business.

## **IV. Access to and Control Over Assets and Resources**

Labor force participation in Uzbekistan is 53.8 percent for women and 77.7 percent for men. As in other countries in the region, there is occupational sex disaggregation, with women in lower-paying fields (education, health care, social services, accommodation, catering) and men in more profitable sectors (construction, industry, transport, communications, IT). SMEs were responsible for generating 46 percent of the country’s GDP in the first half of 2017; and accounted for over 16,000 new small businesses, among which 42.3 percent were women-headed. While there are no legal obstacles for female entrepreneurship,

---

<sup>358</sup> Yeniseyev, Maksim. 2017 *op cit*.

their lack of skills in finance and management means that they are primarily involved with microenterprises, which limits their activities and earning potential. In addition, lack of collateral is an obstacle for women interested in obtaining a business loan. Currently, property owned by women composes only 22.3 percent of all property registered with the National Agency on Land and Property Cadastre. Moreover, real estate is commonly registered under men's names, especially in rural areas. When women are able to start businesses, they usually lead in services (34 percent), trade (16 percent), non-food production (16 percent), food production (9 percent), agricultural farms (5 percent), and other spheres (21 percent). By providing professional training for women only in baking, sewing, and hairdressing, existing programs are perpetuating these divisions. These skills generate less income than more technical skills and keep women in lower-paying jobs. One informant mentioned that technical colleges and universities in Uzbekistan sometimes do not even have dormitories for women, which discourages their enrollment further.

In an effort to become more accessible to ordinary citizens, the government introduced e-governance and e-court systems. Many informants mentioned that the system of e-governance strengthened access to the government including registration of businesses and civil society groups, applying to courts for various matters and social benefits. In addition, in 2017, the GoU established a Virtual Reception office in each administrative locality through which the citizens can send inquiries directly to the government.

The WCU addresses women's appeals, which include inquiries about receiving legal, social, and housing assistance, and financial aid, as well as questions on cultural behavior, dress codes, weddings, and rituals.

E-governance systems are especially important for women who have less mobility due to time consumed by family obligations and stricter control of their movement. In addition, e-governance provides anonymity, which is an important factor for women, who may, due to social pressure, be discouraged or embarrassed by going to court, especially when a case of domestic violence is in question. As a result of e-governance the number of cases filed by women has increased.

## **V. Patterns of Power and Decision-Making**

Even though there has been a 30 percent quota for women in political parties' lists of candidates since 2004, the proportion of women in Parliament remains low, at 16 percent in 2017. Low participation of women is also evident in decision-making positions at the local level. In 2017, all *hokims* (mayors) in 14 regions and in the city of Tashkent were male. Only 16.67 percent (14 out of 84) deputy *hokims* of *viloyat* (regions) were female, mostly for women's issues. Similarly, at the district level, women accounted for 193 out of 1,772 deputy district *hokims* (25 percent) in 2017.

In regard to women's representation in justice administration and delivery, in 2017, only about 25 percent of judges were female, although that number did increase towards the end of the year. Women are less likely to choose a career as a judge due to the position's time commitment which interferes with home obligations. As a result, there is a lack of female role models holding this position.

Women are also underrepresented in the water and energy sectors. They represent between 5-10 percent of employees of state water management institutions and usually occupy lower-paid junior roles. At the largest electricity provider, Uzbekenergo, women constitute only 17 percent of employees.

## Annex 2: Bibliography

- Asia Development Bank. *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*. Update. December 2018.
- BioDiversity International. “Improving Seed systems for smallholder farmers’ food security” program: Integrating gender in the project’s research activities. 2018.
- Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network. *Human Rights Violation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights in Uzbekistan*. UN Human Rights Committee. 2015.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of Uzbekistan (2015). *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*. November 2015.
- Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. “On Approval of the Concept of Strengthening the Institution of the Family in the Republic of Uzbekistan.” Last modified June 29, 2018. <http://lex.uz/ru/docs/3797628>
- Decree: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. “On Measures to Radically Improve the System of State Support for Persons with Disabilities.” Last modified December 4, 2017. <http://lex.uz/docs/3436196>
- Elshimi, Mohammed S., Raffaello Pantucci, Sarah Lain, and Nadine L. Salman. 2018. “Understanding the Factors Contributing to Radicalisation Among Central Asian Labour Migrants in Russia.” Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.
- Equal Rights Trust. “After the Padishah: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Uzbekistan.” 2016.
- ESCAP. *Examining Women’s Economic Empowerment in SPECA countries*. 2018.
- Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan. 2019. Budapest, Hungary: FAO. FAO. Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment Series. March 2019.
- Human Rights Watch. “We Can’t Refuse to Pick Cotton.” Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan. 2017.
- Kikuta, Haruka. 2019. “Mobile phones and self-determination among Muslim youth in Uzbekistan.” *Central Asian Survey*, 38 (2): 181-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2019.1584603>.
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Guarantees of the Equal Right and Opportunities for Men and Women.” Last modified May 8, 2019. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3220>.
- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence.” Last modified May 21, 2019. <https://regulation.gov.uz/ru/document/3338>.
- Lopez Noriega, Isabel. 2016. “Improving Seed Systems for Smallholder Farmers’ Food Security.” Bioversity International. 2016. <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/e-library/publications/detail/improving-seed-systems-for-smallholder-farmers-food-security-report-of-the-mid-term-workshop-of-th/>.
- Solod, Darina. “In Uzbekistan, Women’s Rights are Changing – But Not Fast Enough,” *Open Democracy*, July 4, 2018. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/uzbekistan-gender-inequality-violence-en/>.
- Trafficking in persons report 2018, US Embassy, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.
- Turdiev, Mirjahan. *Changing traditions by following traditions: Disability inclusive development in Uzbekistan*, 2015.
- USAID/Central Asia. *Integrating Gender: USAID Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Activity in Central Asia*, 2019.
- USAID/Central Asia. *Summary Gender Analysis: Uzbekistan*, 2012.
- USAID/Central Asia. *Agricultural Value Chain Project Gender Strategy*. September 2016.

U.S. Mission Uzbekistan. "2018 Trafficking in Persons Report: Uzbekistan." U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan. July 9, 2018. <https://uz.usembassy.gov/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report-uzbekistan/>.

United States Department of State. *Uzbekistan Human Rights Report 2018*.

"'We Can't Refuse to Pick Cotton': Forced and Child Labor Linked to World Bank Group Investments in Uzbekistan." 2019. Human Rights Watch. January 2, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/27/we-cant-refuse-pick-cotton/forced-and-child-labor-linked-world-bank-group>.

"Youth Is a Great Power That Ensures Economic Growth in the Country." The National Human Rights Centre of the Republic of Uzbekistan. August 13, 2018. [http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek\\_news/8099/](http://www.nhrc.uz/en/news/uzbek_news/8099/).

### **Annex 3: GSIA Key Informant Interviews**

#### **July 8, 2019**

- Health team, Anna Meltzer and Flora Salikhova (USAID)
- EG team, Shahzoda Alikhanova PMS and Bahtiyor Mirzabaev, PMS (USAID)
- DG team representative, Mamed Askerov, Project Manager Specialist (USAID)
- Focus group discussion with IPs: UNDP Rule of Law Partnership in Uzbekistan (Azamat Salaev, Rano Ismailova, Kseniya Rijkova), AVC (Asror Nazirov, Deputy Chief of Party), Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan (JRUP) Program (Natasa Rasic, DCoP, Rakhima Nazarova, CSO Capacity Building Specialist)

#### **July 9, 2019**

- NGO Sharoit, Dilmurad Yussupov and Mukhabbat Rakhimova
- OSCE, Juergen Becker and Malika Urimbaeva
- Civil Initiative Support Center, Dilovar Kabulova
- Istiqbolii Avlod (Future Generation), Nodira Karimova, Chairperson

#### **July 10, 2019**

- Scientific-Practical Center “OILA,” under the Cabinet of the Ministry of Health, Diloram Tashmuhamedova, Head
- ADB Mekhri Khudaiberdieva, Senior Social Development (Gender) Officer
- Saida Yusupova, CTJ/ Green Business Innovations, CEO
- Project HOPE, David Tchitchinadze
- National Committee on Women Affairs, Marufova Gulnara, Deputy Chair, Dilyarom Kuzieva, Head of the Department, Bunjod Mashatyussupov, Head of the Department

#### **July 11, 2019**

- U.S. Embassy, Ekaterina Biryukova, Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Specialist, Dilbar Sulaimanova, Small Grants Coordinator
- Regional Dialogue, Petra Gorjup, Head of Branch Office
- IOM Central Asia Nodira Saidkarimova, confirmed

#### **July 12, 2019**

- UNICEF, Sufang GUO, Chief of Health & Wellbeing
- NeMolchi
- UNFPA, Dilfuza Nabieva, Program Analyst on Gender and Youth

## **ANNEX 8: LIST OF RESPONDENTS**

### **Kazakhstan**

#### **July 1, 2019**

- Stephanie Garvey, Regional DG Director, and DG Specialists (Madina Kusmoldanova, Ainura Zhamieva, Inna Biryukova, and Irina Mitrofanova) (USAID)
- Dinara Amanzholova, USAID/Kazakhstan Office Gender PoC (USAID)
- Acting EG Director (Energy), Svetlana Golovatskaya, COR for CTJ project, Lora Kudaibergenova, COR for Energy Links project, Anara Yesdauletova (USAID)
- Madina Kusmoldanova, media portfolio, Ainura Zhamieva, civil society portfolio, Inna Biryukova, C-TIP (USAID)
- LGBTI informant (anonymous)

#### **July 2, 2019**

- Health and education team/representatives: Sholpan Makhmudova – Proj. Mgt. Spec/Gender POC, Inna Kirilyuk – Proj. Mng. Ass/Youth Coordinator, Lidiya Beisembayeva – Admin. Asst./LGBTI Coordinator, Dairov Arman – Proj. Mgt. Spec., Andrew Colburn – Regional Education Officer, Daniel VerSchneider – HEO Deputy Director (USAID)
- LGBTI Coordinator, Lidiya Beisembayeva (USAID)
- Youth Coordinator, Inna Kirilyuk, Project Mgmt. Specialists, Ainur Zhamieva, Elena Samarkina, Youth POC, Turkmenistan (via phone) (USAID)
- FGD with Gender and Inclusive Development group (USAID)
- Power the Future (PtF), Bayan Abylkairova and Tleubaldy Ayaulym (via phone)
- Smart Waters, Anna Inozemtseva, Leading Specialist, Tatiana Shakirova, Advisor to CAREC Executive Director, Lyudmila Kiktenko, Program Manager

#### **July 3, 2019**

- Internews, Ms Zarina Akhmatova, Regional Business Media Advisor, Irina Mednikova, Regional Program Coordinator, and Erzhan Suleimenov Country Program Director
- KZ Union of People Living With HIV, Oksana Ibragimova, Amanzholov Nurali, President, and Lyubov Vorontsova, Advocacy Specialist
- CTJ (DAI), Geoff Wright, Chief of Party, Lyudmila Firsova, Deputy Chief of Party, Zaure Abdiraman, Technical Director, and Vassiliy Lakhonin, Training Coordinator
- EBRD, Alma Kassymova, National Program Manager, Small Business Support Team (SBS) Kazakhstan
- Just Support Foundation/TEENs, Svetlana Bogatyreva, Executive Director

#### **July 4, 2019**

- LGBTI informant (anonymous)
- LGBTI informant (anonymous)
- Association of Disabled Women “Shyrak,” Lyazzat Kaltayeva, Chairperson

#### **July 5, 2019**

- IOM, Ms. Aliya Belonossova (Alikova), National Officer
- Women’s Leadership Fund, Ms. Maria Gusseinova, Executive Director
- ARGO, Dzhamilya Asanova, CEO, and Kaisha Atakanova
- Global Health Research Center for Central Asia, Mr. Vitaly Vinogradov

#### **July 22, 2019**

- UN Women, Elaine Conkievich, Representative

## **Uzbekistan**

### **July 8, 2019**

- Health team, Anna Meltzer and Flora Salikhova (USAID)
- EG team, Shahzoda Alikhanova PMS and Bahtiyor Mirzabaev, PMS (USAID)
- DG team representative, Mamed Askerov, Project Manager Specialist (USAID)
- FGD with IPs: UNDP Rule of Law Partnership in Uzbekistan (Azamat Salaev, Rano Ismailova, Kseniya Rijkova), AVC (Asror Nazirov, Deputy Chief of Party), Judicial Reform in Uzbekistan (JRUP) Program (Natasa Rasic, DCoP, Rakhima Nazarova, CSO Capacity Building Specialist)

### **July 9, 2019**

- NGO Sharoit, Dilmurad Yussupov and Mukhabbat Rakhimova
- OSCE, Juergen Becker and Malika Urimbaeva
- Civil Initiative Support Center, Dilovar Kabulova
- Istiqbolii Avlod (Future Generation), Nodira Karimova, Chairperson

### **July 10, 2019**

- Scientific-Practical Center “Oila,” under Cabinet of Ministry of Health, Diloram Tashmuhamedova, head
- ADB Mekhri Khudaiberdieva, Senior Social Development (Gender) Officer
- Saida Yusupova, CTJ/Green Business Innovations, CEO
- Project HOPE, David Tchitchinadze
- National Committee on Women Affairs, Marufova Gulnara, Deputy Chair, Dilyarom Kuzieva, Head of the Department, Bunjod Mashatyussupov, Head of the Department

### **July 11, 2019**

- U.S. Embassy, Ekaterina Biryukova, Environment, Science, Technology and Health Specialist, Dilbar Sulaimanova, Small Grants Coordinator
- Regional Dialogue, Petra Gorjup, Head of Branch office
- IOM Central Asia Nodira Saidkarimova, confirmed

### **July 12, 2019**

- UNICEF, Sufang GuO, Chief of Health & Wellbeing
- NeMolchi
- UNFPA, Dilfuza Nabieva, Program Analyst on Gender and Youth

## **Tajikistan**

### **July 15, 2019**

- EG Team: Tojiddin Najmedinov, Economic Growth Project Management Specialist; Muhiddin Nurmatov, Economic Growth Project Management Specialist (USAID)
- Dilafrouz Zoirova, DG Specialist (USAID)
- Lola Yuldasheva, Health Management Specialist, Malika Mahkambaeva, Health Management Specialist (USAID)
- FGD with IPs: Kurbonov A. (MoveAbility), Popova A. (Internews), Shackleton J. (Accelerate Prosperity/Aga Khan Foundation), Qodirova N. (Land Market Reform), Bakhtdavlatova A. (Partnership for Socio Economic Development), Ismoilova J. (Project Hope), Akhmedova K. (Tajikistan Health and Nutrition), Terry Giles (Read With Me), Kamilla Mamadnazarova (FtF TAWA), Mirzoev B. (OSC RWM), Komihzada S.



## **July 16, 2019**

- Nigina Rajabova, State Agency in Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (Member of the Women Entrepreneurships Task Force)
- NASMB (TajikMama), Matluba Uldjabayeva, Chairperson, Sanovbar Imomnazarova, Director, Aminova Nasibakhon
- National Association of Business Women, Sanavbar Sharipova (Skype)
- League of Women with Disability/NGO “Ishtirok,” Saida Inoyatova
- LGBT Informant (Anonymous)
- Coalition From De-Jure to De Facto Equality, Chair, Tatiana Bozrikova
- State Women’s Committee, Javohir Akobirova, Head of Gender and International Relations Department

## **July 17, 2019 – site visit to Bokhtar**

- NGO “Parvozi Parastu”, Nigora Nuralieva
- Two FGDs with female beneficiaries of the FtF projects in Bokhtar, Khatlon District

## **July 18, 2019**

- FGD with the Embassy Dushanbe Gender Working Group – Muyassar Qoziva, Program Manager, INL, U.S. Department of State, Khurshed Pol Econ Assistant, U.S. Embassy, Malika Jurakulova, COT Gender Adviser
- Mavjuda Nabieva, Education Management Specialist (USAID)
- ADB, Gulnora Kholova, Gender Adviser
- FtF Land Market Development, Chynara Arapova, Chief of Party
- UN Women, Aziza Hamidova, Head of Office, Diana Ismailova
- Internews, Abdumalik Kadirov, Country Director, Angelina Popova, Gender POC
- NGO “Gender and Development,” Nargis Saidova, Director, Viloyat Mirzoeva, Gender Adviser

## **Turkmenistan**

### **July 22, 2019**

- Jeren Hakiyeva, USAID Governance Support program (phone)
- Sabir Agabalayev, NGO Keyik Okara (phone)
- NGO KII (wishes to remain anonymous)
- Christine Weigand, UNICEF Country Representative (Skype)

### **July 23, 2019**

- Elena Samarkina, USAID TKO (phone)
- Abadan Hayitova, USAID Governance Support program (phone)
- Arslan Omadov, Junior Achievement M&E Specialist (e-mail questionnaire)
- Gozel Atamuradova, UNDP SCRL (e-mail questionnaire)

## **ANNEX 9: INTERVIEW TOOLS**

### **Illustrative Interview Guide**

The questions below illustrate general “core” questions that may be asked both in KII and in FGDs.

1. What do you see as the major gender issues and/or gaps in x country broadly?
2. What about in x sector?
3. How do gender and other stereotypes (*i.e.*, related to people with disabilities, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, sexual orientation and/or gender identity) help or hinder opportunities for individuals in the x sector?
4. Do women hold power as 1) political and 2) business leaders in x country? Please provide examples.
5. Does violence against women play a role in their participation in your activity specifically and in x sector more broadly?
6. How do cultural norms regarding the division of labor between men and women in the areas of childcare and housework, and paid employment in x country?
7. To what extent are key resources and services in x sector differently accessible to and controlled by men and women? (for example, education, health services, opportunities to start a business, networks, technology, etc.) Please provide examples.
8. Do marginalized groups (youth, people with disabilities, minorities, LGBTI people) face challenges in accessing and controlling assets and resources in x sector? (for example, education, health services, opportunities to start a business, networks, technology, etc.) Please provide examples.
9. What are the key Government national instruments/mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality in x country in x sector?
10. Does x country have legislation that specifically addresses the rights of youth, persons with disabilities, LGBTI people, and ethnic/religious minorities?
11. Are the existing gender equality and social inclusion laws and policies enforced and implemented in an effective manner? If not, what are the main obstacles?
12. Does x country have any legislation that in any way discriminates against women or other vulnerable groups? Please provide examples.
13. Does media play a role in shaping public opinion on gender equality and social inclusion issues? Please provide examples.
14. What are the major opportunities to empower women or close gaps between men and women in this country at the moment?
15. Where have you seen progress in addressing gender inequalities over the past five years?
16. Are there any programs that you know of that provide especially strong examples of good practices?
17. Are there any potential differential impacts of development policies and programs on males and females, including unintended or negative consequences? Please provide examples.
18. Which donors and international NGOs are working with youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTI people?

In addition, questions below may be asked of specific types of informants as needed.

### **USAID/CA staff**

1. To what extent are you familiar with USAID's guidance on: 1) gender; 2) people with disabilities; 3) LGBTI people; and 4) youth? Please share the key resources on these topics you use in your work.
2. How long have you worked at USAID/CA?
3. During this time, have you observed any changes regarding approaches and implementation of 1) gender; 2) people with disabilities; 3) LGBTI; and 4) youth considerations in programming? Please provide examples.
4. Can you please provide examples of how you/your team/your office has addressed gender constraints to promote more equal relationships between men and women and empowerment of women?
5. How is gender-based violence (GBV), if at all, a part of the context within which your work/programs take place? In your experience, does GBV have any effect on participation and access to activity benefits for women/girls and men/boys, LGBTI people, people with disabilities, or youth?
6. What are the key challenges for the inclusion of gender, disability, LGBTI, and youth considerations at the activity level?
7. Are there ways in which the Mission can support you (staff) and the IPs better to integrate gender, disability, LGBTI, and youth considerations into your work more effectively?
8. Do you have any recommendations on how gender, disability, LGBTI, and youth considerations should be incorporated in the new RDCS, both 1) specific to your sector and 2) more broadly?

Are you coordinating/working with other donors to generate synergies for achieving greater impact on gender equality, disability, LGBTI issues, and youth in your sector? Please provide examples.

### **NGOs/CSOs (KIIs)**

1. What are the key challenges you face in your work in the promotion of gender equality and/or social inclusion? By social inclusion, we mean inclusion of marginalized groups, including youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTI people.
2. Can you identify specific areas in your sector in which USAID (donor) support on gender and/or social inclusion would be especially beneficial?

### **IPs (KIIs/FDGs)**

1. Can you provide examples of USAID/CA's support to your activity on gender and social inclusion issues? By social inclusion, we mean inclusion of marginalized groups, including youth, people with disabilities, and LGBTI people.
2. Are there examples of your activity not receiving adequate support by USAID/CA on gender and social inclusion issues, despite your explicit requests?
3. Do you have any recommendations on how USAID/CA's guidance and support on gender and social inclusion issues to IPs can be improved?
4. Do you have recommendations for future partnerships/coordination between USAID/CA and other donors/government/civil society on gender and social inclusion in your sector?
5. Do you have any recommendations on how gender and social inclusion considerations should be incorporated in the new USAID/CA' RDCS, both 1) specific to your sector, and 2) more broadly?

### **IDWG (FGD)**

1. What are your roles and responsibilities as IDWG members?

2. Do you think you have sufficient knowledge/capacity to be an IDWG member? If not, what type of capacity building activities would you require?
3. Can you provide examples of how you help your colleagues with integrating gender and social inclusion in their work?
4. What are the main challenges to the functioning and effectiveness of IDWG?
5. In your opinion, is USAID/CA doing enough to integrate gender and social inclusion in all phases of the project cycle? Please provide examples whether a “yes” or a “no.”
6. Do you have any recommendations on ways for the Mission to help the IDWG be more effective in its provision of gender and social inclusion assistance?

## ANNEX 10: SURVEY ANALYSIS

GSIA Survey was administered to USAID/CA staff and the IPs. 49 individuals took the survey, and there was a 57 percent completion rate. Not all individuals answered all the questions.

### Section 1: Demographic profile

Fifty-three (53) percent of the respondents were USAID/CA staff, and 47 percent were IPs; 59 percent were female, and 41 percent were male. More than half of respondents (55 percent) were Kazakhstan-based, followed by Tajikistan at 22 percent, Turkmenistan at 12 percent, and Uzbekistan at 10 percent. Nearly half of the respondents work on democracy and governance (civil society, democratic institutions building), followed by EG (investment and trade, agriculture, energy, and water) at 45 percent, and social sector improvements (health and education) at 40 percent (multiple persons work in more than one sector).

### Section 2: Knowledge about gender and social inclusion guidance

The respondents had the most knowledge about the GEFE policy, with 35 percent having read it carefully and using it in their work, and with more than half (51 percent) have taken a look at it. About half of respondents have read carefully or have taken a look at the Youth Policy and Disability Policy. LGBTI Vision for Action is the least known to the respondents, with 26 percent having never heard of it, and 46 percent only being aware of it. Thirty-seven (37 percent) of respondents report never having received any type of gender and social inclusion training. Fifty-seven (57 percent) have received training in gender.

When asked whether there have been any changes in gender equality and social inclusion over the past five years, 60 percent respondents said “yes,” and 40 percent said “no.” The changes, as noted by the respondents, include:

#### *Positive Changes*

- Due to the advancements taking place currently with the rapidly changing technologies, Internet, and mass communications as leading tools in the previously traditional Central Asian societies, the culture and approaches are changing. The establishment of the world community and Internet promotion in the Central Asian countries contributes that people and groups respond to the needs of having diverse looks and approaches for social diversity and inclusion.
- Greater overall awareness by local counterparts, not a wholesale change, but attitudes and awareness are evolving.
- Women-farmers are getting more knowledgeable in term of their rights to productive resources.
- Women are more open and are free to advocate for their rights in social media in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan.
- Number of female professionals in the energy sector experienced a slight increase compared to the last two years in Kazakhstan.
- Participation of LGBTI and representatives of key population in the decision-making process in Kyrgyzstan has increased.
- The Government of Tajikistan as well as the society have changed their attitudes about gender equality, especially women's rights over the last ten years. Women are encouraged to actively participate in the country's socio-economic and political life, especially in combating radicalism and violent extremism.
- The Government of Uzbekistan is raising the issues of gender equality, including the adoption of two new laws on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence Against Women. New Senate Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality will be established in 2019.
- More public attention is paid to gender issues and equality in the health sector. Communities' attitudes towards women change the sector.
- Kyrgyzstan in particular has made huge strides in having women hold and occupy key positions in all parts of the three branches of government.
- The USAID-funded Tajikistan 2017 DHS reported a 7 percent increase (31 percent) in spousal abuse over the last five years (it was 24 percent in the Tajikistan 2012 DHS). Experts believe this trend should be perceived as positive because it shows the effectiveness of the awareness

campaign conducted after the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence was adopted in Tajikistan in 2013.

#### *Negative Changes*

- In Turkmenistan, in 2018-2019, the government started to deprive women from driving and limiting some other of their rights.
- In Tajikistan, there is increased LGBTI discrimination.

### **Section 3: Best practices and lessons learned in gender and social inclusion**

#### **I. Gender**

##### **Best Practices**

- Crosscutting across all sectors and all projects.
- Including gender-sensitive indicators into the IPs' Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP).
- Trainings, participation in fora, discussing gender integration with IPs and beneficiaries.
- Gender is part of the procurement process.
- Hiring and promoting very qualified women to key project positions.
- Identifying rare women working in the sector and disseminating their stories of success to the broader audiences. Acknowledging and valuing female participation via public tools. Using successful women as role models for girls and female youth to enter the sector for their career pursuit and technical or STEM education.
- Donor coordination on promoting gender equality laws.
- Interaction of partner organizations with governmental organizations, such as the Union of Women of Turkmenistan, through joint work in the field of gender development.
- Organizing events (workshops, study tours) to support women's involvement and leadership in Kazakhstan.
- GBV program, all basic education programs.

##### *Health*

- Open Doors for women to be screened for TB while receiving complimentary maternal and child health services.
- Involvement of religious leaders into issues related to maternal and child health and nutrition.
- GBV prevention for female inmates.
- Training of health personnel; informational and educational sessions for key populations.

##### *Media*

- Sub-grants for Media campaigns and training for media on how to develop a media campaign.
- Media programming (Internews), CTIP (DAR), P4I (Tajikistan).
- In 2018, Internews supported a media campaign implemented by Asia Plus entitled "I am Woman & I am Capable" to empower women. The campaign was so successful that it got support from private business to extend its life for additional 12 months.

##### *EG*

- Grants for women entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan.
- The best experience USAID in Tajikistan had on gender was the Women's Economic Empowerment Project.
- Organizing common interest and self-help groups.
- Supporting the basin planning in small transboundary river basins (mostly with men in administration and basin councils), the project implemented women-targeted researches and capacity building activities.

## **Lessons Learned**

### **Gender**

- Gender is not fully integrated into USAID/CA activities; need more refresher training for the Mission staff and IPs and establish commitment.
- Gender is more broad definition rather than male and female. More genders should be taken into consideration.
- To promote CEDAW implementation and monitoring.
- Government and community engagement is key.
- Not possible to change the gender roles in 5-year period of activity/project/strategy.
- It is hard to change stereotypes in the society; media is the best tool to address the issue.
- The main lessons learned are changes made in local communities. It was possible to change people's perception in traditional and patriarchal society if this activity leads to household income generation.
- The collapse of the economic system (after the collapse of Soviet Union), mass closing of kindergartens, laboratories, education and medical units, and other organizations with suitable jobs for women, became the main reason of a quick degradation of the position of women in family, economic, and social activities.

### **2. LGBTI**

#### **Best Practices**

- Supporting human rights and LGBTI groups through sub-grants and customized technical assistance.
- HIV/AIDS work.

## **Lessons Learned**

### **LGBTI**

- This is a sensitive topic throughout the region; large societal resistance.
- Explain to the partners and establish staff commitment. Provide trainings on social inclusion and diversity.
- Not recognized as group by the Government of Turkmenistan.
- These groups are very difficult to contact and work with, as they are victimized by the state ministry of interior.
- Very rarely mentioned within USAID activities.
- Government and community engagement is key.
- While working on this topic in the traditional societies like Tajikistan one should be very careful not to contradict with local traditions and customs: pushing the topic too hard may have an opposite effect.

### **3. Disability**

#### **Best Practices**

- Supporting DPOs through a stand-alone project aimed at promoting rights of people with disabilities.
- Civil society programming (GGIF, media, P4I, Bereke).
- Participation of people with disabilities and groups in the design of grant programs.
- Vocational trainings.
- Awareness raising campaign on issues of people with disabilities, training for DPOs on constructive advocacy. Under Internews supported media campaign on the rights of people with disabilities; the Vecherka newspaper produced six reports of different formats placing it on five different platforms. The campaign resulted in accepting several children with disabilities in the general secondary schools to study in general groups, the fact that was impossible before.

- Active work of NGOs in Turkmenistan to support and assistance to groups of people with disabilities.
- Cooperation with DPOs.
- Education reading component for children with low vision in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Cross-sectoral.
- Engaging more partners and stakeholders.
- The governments are more open to work in this area.
- Explain to the partners and establish staff commitment. Provide trainings on social inclusion and diversity.
- Not much support for disabled people from government side, but some efforts to improve the situation is ongoing.
- Media is the best tool to address the issue.

## **4. Youth**

### **Best Practices**

- Integrate youth as a cross-cutting objective into all USAID-funded projects.
- Civil society programming (Bereke).
- Role models—successful women and men in the field should be used to attract the best youth cadres to the technical field for their studies, higher and vocational education.
- Youth programs in Turkmenistan (Youth Centers Project and Enriching Youth for Tomorrow).
- Vocational training.
- Organizing lectures and seminars for youth in clean energy sector.
- Internews carried out training of trainers on media literacy for 16 young activists from eight American Corners across Tajikistan who then continued the relay in their hometowns and trained more than 160 of their peers on distinguishing truth from face in social networks.
- Organization of various events by partner organizations, USAID projects for young people, promoting education, leadership, and professional skills.
- Hackathons with youth, social projects and business start-ups.
- Summer camp activities.
- Workforce development program in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

### **Lessons learned**

- Cross-sectoral.
- This can be a sensitive area in some countries, like Tajikistan.
- The Government strictly controls the efforts of international organizations to work with youth. It wants to avoid “brainwashing” youth. Government’s tendency is to raise youth in an atmosphere of obeying to the current regime.
- The quality of middle and high school education, completion of higher education are still issues; the poor quality of education poorly affects choices of young people, in particular those related to health.
- Government and community engagement is key.
- Youth could be reached via social media; the best is peer-to-peer approach.
- Universities lack the courses in renewable energy. PtF is now working on development of a course for AUPET to support young people’s knowledge and future employment in renewable energy.
- Civic education programs and business trainings are essential to youth to be engaged in community level activities.
- Educational to ensure life-long learning, skills acquisition, job employment, and entrepreneurship; promote a culture of peace, non-violence, and cultural diversity; and contribute to socio-economic development



## **Section 4: Recommendations for USAID/CA RDCCS**

### **Operational**

- Training for USAID partners on gender and social inclusion.
- Disseminate the specific literature and sources on gender and inclusive development, with the best experience in this field. Distribute guidance, training, examples from other Missions, capacity-building materials how to establish/develop the implementing staff commitment for advancing gender equality and inclusive development issues, how to build the subcontractor's devotion and motivation to this inclusive development agenda.
- Provide financial support for youth programs, currently the funds are being collected from other areas to finance youth programming.
- Additional support would definitely be needed for better technical alignment in designing gender/social inclusive country context-tailored interventions.
- The USAID/Central Asia leadership needs to keep emphasizing the importance of gender considerations and provide opportunities for Central Asia Mission staff and IPs to attend gender training.
- Entry-level gender training for the IPs' staff (not just management) would be beneficial at the start of the programs.
- Systemic and holistic approach is needed, starting from the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) development, program design, followed by the implementation stage and documenting lessons learned for the future programs.
- A paragraph about gender and social inclusion should be included in COR/AOR designation letters.
- Projects should not only be aimed at women but also implemented by women, especially Central Asian women.
- Consider additional financial and human resources for gender and social inclusion.

### **Programmatic**

- More focus on empowering women through entrepreneurship.
- Support research of the role of women in water, land, environment, natural resources management, and economic assessments of the costs of such situation; Support regional level meetings to discuss findings of the research, needs, solutions and progress; Support application of solutions at pilot areas (local, municipal, national, etc.).
- Additional funding for local media to produce quality content on the mentioned topics will help. Funding of NGOs/activists who deal with the above-mentioned issues to learn how to produce quality content and promote it using new media will help as well.
- Target parents of disabled children with awareness-raising campaigns.
- Bring an international experience into the countries.
- Support community centers across the four countries.
- Commission more country diagnostics studies and research studies to ensure evidence-based policymaking.
- Support the creation of public associations of disabled women and develop stand-alone Women with Disabilities Program.
- Use the best experts and successful leaders in the field as role models for youth; disseminate their success stories. systems/curricula pre-service