

# **Gender Assessment and Plan of Action for USAID/Bulgaria**

A project funded by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development under contract number FAO-0100-C-00-6005-00 with Development Alternatives, Inc.

July 2001



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A Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

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*This publication was made possible through support provided by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs Field Support and Research, U.S. Agency for International Development, under the terms of Contract No. FAO-0100-C-00-6005-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.*

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by

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July 2001



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## ACRONYMS

ABA/CEELI	American Bar Association / Central and East European Legal Initiative
ACILS	American Center for International Labor Solidarity
ADS	Automated Directive System
CEDAW	U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DemNet	Democracy Network
FLAG	Firm-Level Assistance Group
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
ISC	Institute of Sustainable Communities
LGI	Local Government Initiative
NAMRB	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NSI	National Statistics Institute
PLEDGE	Partners in Local Economic Development and Government Effectiveness
R4	Results Review/Resource Request
SAA	Strategic Assistance Area
SELDI	Southeast European Legal Development Initiative
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SO	Strategic Objective
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/E&E	United States Agency for International Development/Europe and Eurasia Bureau
USAID/G/WID	United States Agency for International Development/Global Office of Women in Development
USAID/Bulgaria	United States Agency for International Development Mission for Bulgaria
WIDtech	Women in Development Technical Assistance Project



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

USAID's Mission to Bulgaria has a primary goal of assisting the country to move toward becoming a self-sustaining, market-oriented democracy.<sup>1</sup> To achieve this goal, USAID/Bulgaria has activities that span all three of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau's Strategic Assistance Areas: (1) Economic Restructuring, (2) Democratic Transition, and (3) Social Transition. In 2001, USAID/Bulgaria will review its results in each Strategic Assistance Area and develop the Mission's new three- to five-year country strategy. As part of this process, the Mission requested technical assistance to conduct a gender analysis to better understand the overall situations of men and women in Bulgaria and how their situations are reflected in the Mission's portfolio of activities. The analysis and recommendations provided in this Gender Assessment and Plan of Action will assist USAID/Bulgaria in mainstreaming gender into the new country strategy, programs, and policies and procedures.

### MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Strategic Assistance Area 1: Economic Restructuring

##### *SO 1.3 – Accelerated Growth and Development of Private Enterprise in a Competitive Environment*

The Mission is assisting Bulgaria to develop its micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector by supporting activities that provide direct assistance to firms, strengthen associations, provide credit, develop specific industry sectors, and assist in the development of a legal and regulatory framework. Successes have been reported under this Strategic Objective. *The Report on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria* shows an increase from 177,063 enterprises in 1996 to 204,845 enterprises in 1998. Women are active players in this sector, as seen by the fact that women-owned enterprises make up 29 percent of the businesses surveyed. In 1999, the total percentage of new enterprises started by women was 40 percent (1,179 of the total new enterprises).<sup>2</sup>

*Competitiveness Initiative Exercise.* The Competitiveness Initiative Exercise is working to improve the competitiveness level of certain industry clusters to assist the country in preparing for its accession to the European Union. Gender analysis is important in guaranteeing sustainable and equitable results for this activity, even though industries or clusters appear to be gender neutral when looking at them at a macro level.

<sup>1</sup> USAID/Bulgaria, "Results Review and Resource Request (R4)," draft, February 26, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Report on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Bulgaria*, Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Sofia, 2000.



Recommendations:

Complete a gender analysis of the two industries identified to proceed to the second phase. Questions should be asked about what are the criteria for identifying champions, do men and women (enterprise owners and employees) in a cluster have different needs, and are there different constraints for women and women in this cluster. Answers should be analyzed for gender issues and how to address these issues.

*Firm-Level Assistance Group.* The Firm-Level Assistance Group (FLAG) activity provides demand-driven assistance to SMEs. Additionally, FLAG works on strengthening business associations. In the first quarter report of FY 2001, FLAG reported that 67 women-owned and -managed enterprises were assisted. Thirty-three percent of enterprises assisted were owned or managed by women. FLAG did not complete any analysis of the type of training or consulting assistance requested by men- or women-owned and directed enterprises. The implementing partners did not have any information on the participation levels of men and women in the assisted associations.

Recommendations:

1. Collect and report sex-disaggregated data on all people-level indicators, including jobs created and association members.
2. Gather qualitative information on assistance requested by men- and women-owned enterprises. If differences are noted, targeted assistance should include both men- and women-owned enterprises.

*Credit Activities.* USAID/Bulgaria funds three activities that provide increased accessibility of credit to SMEs. Job creation is seen as an additional benefit from the growth of the SMEs, resulting from use of credit. The Nachala Cooperative provided 418 loans (43.78 percent to women-owned enterprises) during the fourth quarter of 2000. Total value of the loans disbursed to women-owned enterprises was \$1,844,047, or 42.01 percent of total. In October 1-December 31, 2000, Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) credit activity disbursed 502 loans with a total value of \$240,389.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 40 percent of the loan clients are women. Neither the Nachala Cooperative activity nor the CRS credit activity included sex-disaggregated information such as the size of enterprise, repayment periods, average loan size, use of funds, and type of enterprises.

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<sup>3</sup> Data taken from *CRS' Quarterly Report*, October-December 2000.

Recommendations:

1. Provide sex-disaggregated data on above criteria.
2. Analyze credit activity data and investigate any significant discrepancies.
3. Gather qualitative data that include success stories and examples of mainstreaming gender in activities.

*SO 1.4 – A More Competitive and Market Responsive Private Financial Sector*

Activities under this Strategic Objective include bank privatization and supervision, commercial bankers training program, and strengthening of Bulgaria's capital market. One implementing partner stated that there are issues of differential pay for men and women, sexual harassment, and discrimination against women within the financial sector.

*Agriculture, Credit, and Firm-Level Assistance Assessments.* A USAID team will complete an internal assessment of the micro-credit, SME development, and firm-level assistance activities in July 2001. Additionally, the team will evaluate the agricultural sector in Bulgaria and recommend possible areas for USAID's assistance. The following are recommended readings for the team and suggestions about people to be interviewed and questions to be raised so gender issues can be identified and discussed.

Recommendations:

1. Disaggregate data on training courses by sex.
2. Include gender sensitivity training in any management courses funded by USAID/Bulgaria.
3. Integrate gender into planned assessments.

**Readings<sup>4</sup>**

- Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Gender Entrepreneurship and the Role of Women in the Economic Transformation*, Sofia, January 2000.
- Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women's Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000 (hard copy in Mission Program Office).
- "Creating of an Association of Women in Agriculture" paper; consultant will be used by FLAG to conduct an analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> These documents can be found on the Mission Gender drive.

## **Interviewees**

- Genoveva Tisheva, Executive Director, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Sofia, Tel: 980-88-01, email: [tishev@sf.icn.bg](mailto:tishev@sf.icn.bg)
- Maria Zagorska, Rural Women's Clubs, 2-310-936, email: [mzagorska@usa.net](mailto:mzagorska@usa.net)

## **Questions**

The following questions should be asked of stakeholders (men and women) in each sector:

- How might the problems of men and women be different in this sector?
- What are men's and women's participation levels in the activities?

## **Strategic Assistance Area 2: Democratic Transition**

### *Sustainable Indigenous NGO Development*

Despite difficult conditions confronting the development of NGOs—absence of a participatory political culture; scarce resources; and a shortage of requisite, organizational and management skills—women in Bulgaria have taken the lead in developing NGOs as an alternative outlet for civic interest in societal development and thus are advocating for social change.

Although some NGOs address women's concerns exclusively (sometimes know as “women's organizations”), others work on these issues within the greater context of their programs. Addressing gender does not necessarily entail supporting only women-focused NGOs, a commonly held misperception. It means supporting NGOs that recognize that the problems of men and women may differ, as will subsequent solutions.

#### Recommendations:

1. Modify the NGO sustainability index to include an additional category, “inclusiveness.”
2. Integrate gender awareness issues into training curricula and processes for intermediary support organizations.
3. Conduct a gender analysis of the Institute for Sustainable Communities sub-grantee activities.

## *Independent Media*

USAID/Bulgaria's independent media program has been effective in supporting media legislation and regulatory frameworks, training Bulgarian media professionals, and strengthening independent media associations. No study or information was identified that had examined gender in the media, what stories are covered and how and whether stereotypes are promulgated. As the linkages between NGOs and the media become stronger and societal problems gain prominence in public debate, there should be more of an opportunity for issues, such as gender, to gain media attention. It is important that those involved in the media have a strong awareness of gender issues so they can recognize and respond openly when such issues appear.

### Recommendations:

1. Continue to emphasize and support linkages between media and NGOs, which could lead to greater awareness of social issues, within both the media and society as a whole.
2. Train NGOs and particular advocates for women's rights in the effective use of media for public awareness and increased visibility of gender issues.
3. Incorporate a gender-awareness module into the existing broadcast media training.
4. Promote a gender balance in the management training in media.

## *Political Process*

The short-term Civic-Led Voter Education and Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns, organized in preparation for the parliamentary elections in June 2001, are taking a proactive approach to targeting women, youth, Turks, Roma, and other historically underrepresented constituencies. The Political Party Assistance Program, like these campaigns, is a short-term activity, which aims to improve the practices of the major political parties in designing platforms that are more responsive to citizens interests, developing more effective strategies for communicating those platforms, and organizing more effective national campaigns.

### Recommendations:

1. Ensure that public opinion polling data are disaggregated by sex in the Political Party Assistance Program activity.
2. Request, if possible, that the implementing partner of the Civic-Led Voter Education and Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns include in the final report a brief gender analysis of the completed activities.

### *Legislative Strengthening*

With the passing of the Equal Opportunity Act, the Government of Bulgaria will be required to create a “National Machinery,” which will serve as the prime coordinating body in mainstreaming gender into government institutions. The Ministry of Labor, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men shall elaborate, coordinate, and implement the national policy for the provision of equal opportunities for men and women. This bill, which is expected to pass in fall 2001, provides a unique opportunity to instigate a proactive, multisector approach to ensure effective and efficient implementation and enforcement of this important legislation.

#### Recommendations:

1. Create a multisector policy dialogue on the relationship among the Copenhagen Criteria, U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and other international human rights instruments and gender equity legislation (that is, the Equal Opportunity Act).
2. Conduct seminars and workshops for political parties and members of Parliament and the NGO community on special measures for gender equity such as quota systems, equal opportunity acts, and ombudspersons, including an explanation of experiences from other countries.

### *Rule of Law and Judicial Reform*

Bulgaria’s judiciary is approximately two-thirds women, and 8 out of 25 members of the Supreme Judicial Council are women. The distribution of prosecutors by sex is even; however, investigators are primarily men and court administrators are almost entirely women.

For the most part, the foundations of rule of law in Bulgaria have been established. As a signatory to CEDAW and other protective international treaties, the fundamental de jure rights of men and women are protected under the provisions of Bulgarian law. However, there is sparse implementation of these laws and few enforcement mechanisms to ensure the de facto rights of men and women. In response to the above claims, the Bulgarian government recently approved a bill, the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which Parliament is expected to pass next year.

#### Recommendations:

1. Integrate a gender awareness component into legal training.
2. Mount public information campaigns on the draft civil code items promoting gender equity.

3. Organize workshops with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the new Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, when it is passed.
4. Increase assistance to NGOs and associations (for example, women lawyer associations) that participate in the implementation of the new laws.
5. Investigate the possibility of starting a legal center.

### *Corruption*

Corruption in Bulgaria has been identified by Bulgarians as one of the most pervasive societal problems. Corruption affects society in its entirety and infringes on the livelihood of millions. To date, little research has been done on the linkage between gender and corruption. Unfortunately, COALITON 2000's corruption assessment report has been completed, and although the data were age disaggregated, they were not disaggregated by sex.<sup>5</sup> Sex-disaggregated data might have provided a useful dimension to understand the corruption phenomenon, including how it affects government officials, business people, the judiciary, and the Bulgarian population as a whole.

#### Recommendations:

1. Examine the possibility of conducting a small survey to gain insights on the relationship between gender and corruption in Bulgaria.
2. Explore opportunities to incorporate gender in corruption activities under the Southeast Europe Legal Development Initiative (SELDI).

### *Local Government Reform*

There appears to be no differentiation between the interest of the two genders in local government. In fact, in some elections women voters have turned out in higher numbers than men. However, female representation in local government structures, although higher than at the national level, does not reflect the electoral ratio. At present, in elected positions, 6.5 percent (17 out of 262) of mayors and 16 percent of chairs of municipal councils are women (42 out of 262), compared with 21 percent in 1997. Although these figures for both mayoral and council positions have dropped, anecdotal evidence suggests that women are ever-increasingly active in local government activities.

Men and women may access and use public services differently, prioritize different issues, get informed from different sources and by different means, and even be differentially affected by local government fiscal management decisions. Furthermore, it is equally important that when issues pertaining to gender are addressed, such as the upcoming Equal Opportunities Act, efforts are made that men and women together take part in training,

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<sup>5</sup> Information regarding the surveys was gathered in a meeting with Coalition 2000.

conferences, and meetings so they can learn from each other's perspectives and benefit from each other's reactions.

Recommendations:

1. Modify the existing index of citizen ranking of local governments' responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability to include an additional category, "inclusiveness."
2. Organize workshops, at the local level, with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the new Equal Opportunity Act, when passed, and the Child Protection Act.
3. Mount local-level public information campaigns on the draft civil code items promoting gender equity.
4. Encourage implementing partners, when designing communication strategies to deepen citizen awareness, to examine how varying public relations strategies may differentially affect and reach both genders.
5. Integrate gender-awareness issues in existing local government training and training of trainers.

### **Strategic Assistance Area 3: Social Transition**

USAID/Bulgaria's Healthcare Financing Program is focused on strengthening the National Health Insurance Fund. A component of the activity includes establishing procedures for health-care providers, including accurate data systems and sound asset management. Additionally, the activity is assisting the Ministry of Health to design and implement a national health campaign focused on informing people about the system, what services are provided, and the cost of these services. Issues to be considered are the usage by men and women of general practitioners and the unemployment of nurses because of hospital closures.

Recommendations:

1. Gather and analyze data on male and female usage of general practitioners and hospitals. If discrepancy is noted, develop and implement targeted public awareness campaign.
2. Complete an analysis regarding the number of men and women who will lose their jobs as a result of hospital closures. Consideration should be given to developing a retraining program for nurses.
3. Develop sex-disaggregated people-level indicators for new framework. It would be useful to have one or two indicators that measure either usage of general practitioners or patient's opinions on the quality of care. Sex-disaggregated data will allow for any differences to be noted and addressed.

## *Employment*

Employment, or the lack thereof, is a pressing issue for most Bulgarians, men and women. Women and men enter the workforce in relatively equal proportions. The most recent labor statistics show that women's unemployment surpasses that of men's, and more alarmingly, women are entering the ranks of Bulgaria's long-term unemployed.<sup>6</sup> The January-February 2001 *Early Warning Report* notes that the number of discouraged unemployed women is growing.<sup>7</sup> Labor unions are reemerging as a unifying force for workers to fight for their rights. With strong ties to the international labor movement, where gender issues have gained a high profile over the past few years, the Solidarity Center is very aware of the gender issues that exist in the Bulgarian labor force and is working to raise awareness on women-specific labor rights.

### Recommendations:

1. Include relevant labor union committees in any activities (such as workshops, training, and roundtables) relating to labor law legislation.
2. Support local economic development projects in rural communities that are targets for "sweat shop" activities.
3. Support union activities that promote awareness raising and advocacy within the union on women specific labor rights.

## *Education Reform*

From a gender perspective, the Bulgarian educational system displays little evidence of a gender gap. Enrollment data reflect a high degree of parity between boys and girls. Although at all levels there is a necessity to adapt school curricula to meet society's transforming needs, there also must be efforts to train or retrain the existing labor market. Furthermore, traditional and vocational schooling must be aligned with labor market demand. The second issue pertinent to educational reform refers to the institutional capacity of the educational system, which is rapidly deteriorating. Cutbacks in public spending, specifically in areas such as education, differentially impact the employment of women because they constitute the vast majority of teachers in Bulgaria. Although employment rates of teachers appear to have remained steady, a restructuring of the educational sector could lead to a rising number of female teachers who lose their jobs.

### Recommendations:

1. Include the promotion of integrating gender in curriculum development and teacher training activities at all levels—that is, primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational.

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<sup>6</sup> For more detailed statistics, please see the section of this report on Economic Transition, page 4.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP/USAID/Soros, *Early Warning Report*, January-February, 2001.



2. Target minority populations in future education activities, ensuring equal gender participation, and investigate increasing technical and financial assistance to promote a civic education project.
3. Ensure that the civic education curricula are inclusive of gender and ethnicity.

### *Social Insurance Reform*

USAID/Bulgaria is funding the Pension Reform Project to provide expertise to draft legislation, assist with the introduction of the new pension system, and implement a public awareness campaign. Under the new system, the retirement age was raised to 63 for men and 60 for women. Gender issues include no credit for people working without a formal contract or in the shadow economy. Anecdotal evidence states the women are a majority in these sectors. Maternity leave benefit may have detrimental effects on women because employers foresee negative benefits in hiring women of childbirth years. Men and women who are long-term unemployed will not receive credit toward their pension. Women's unemployment is greater than men's, and more women are entering the ranks of Bulgaria's long-term unemployed.<sup>8</sup>

#### Recommendations:

1. Continue a targeted public outreach program to acclimate men and women to the new system and educate them on how the terms and length of their employment will affect their pensions.
2. Prior to the review and drafting of any new legislation, complete a gender analysis.
3. Hold a discussion, when appropriate, in roundtables and meetings, about pension reform and gender issues.
4. Distribute World Bank papers on pension reform and gender issues (available on Mission's Public drive) to implementing partners and government officials.

### *Vulnerable Groups*

Ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, specifically the Roma population, are both socially and economically marginalized. Although both women and men in ethnic populations can be characterized as vulnerable, women overwhelmingly appear to fit into this category. Statistical and anecdotal evidence suggests that Romani women have even less education than Romani men; marry and give birth at very early ages; and suffer more pregnancy complications, premature births, and low-weight babies than non-Romani women. About 40 percent get married before they are 16 years old and 80 percent before the age of 18. Generally, when they marry, the girls will discontinue their education.

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<sup>8</sup> For more detailed statistics, please see the section of this report on Economic Transition, page 4.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct a gender analysis of the target population in the planning and design stage of an activity to ensure that potential differences—and ways to address them—are taken into account. Analysis should include a specific section on the education of girls of minority populations.
2. Investigate the possibility of starting a public health awareness campaign (via media, basic health care courses [reproductive health], and local health care centers) for ethnic minority populations, primarily Roma groups. This would increase health awareness and access to affordable health care facilities.

**CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATION**

The following are recommendations for the Mission to mainstream gender in its activities, policies, and procedures:

1. Provide training on gender mainstreaming for Mission staff and implementing partners.
2. Disaggregate all people-level indicators by sex, when appropriate.
3. Inform implementing partners of USAID's gender policies.
4. Require that implementing partners report on gender considerations to Strategic Objective teams.
5. Include gender analysis in all new country strategies, activity designs, and assessment and evaluations.
6. Identify gender as a cross-cutting issue in the country strategy.
7. Formalize the Mission Gender Committee.
8. Complete the Gender Mission Order on gender mainstreaming.
9. Investigate recruiting an International Women in Development Fellow.
10. Update and promote use of information technology.



## **CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND**

### **INTRODUCTION**

USAID's Mission to Bulgaria has a primary goal of assisting the country move toward becoming a self-sustaining, market-oriented democracy.<sup>9</sup> To achieve this goal, USAID/Bulgaria's activities span all three of the Europe and Eurasia Bureau's Strategic Assistance Areas (SAAs): (1) Economic Restructuring, (2) Democratic Transition, and (3) Social Transition. In 2001, USAID/Bulgaria will review its results in each SAA and develop the Mission's new three- to five-year country strategy. As part of the strategy development, the Mission requested a gender analysis to better understand the overall situations of men and women in Bulgaria and how their situations are reflected in the Mission's portfolio of activities. The analysis and recommendations provided in the assessment will assist the Mission in mainstreaming gender into its new country strategy, technical areas, and policies and procedures.

### **SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY**

USAID/Bulgaria requested support from USAID's Global Office of Women in Development (USAID/G/WID) to conduct a gender analysis of the Mission's portfolio. Two consultants were assigned by the USAID-funded project, WIDtech, to undertake this task. The major tasks under the Statement of Work (see Annex A) of this technical assistance are conducting a gender assessment and designing a gender plan of action.

The methodology applied includes a review of relevant documents, individual and group interviews with Mission staff responsible for planning and implementing programs and projects, and interviews with staff of implementing agencies. Some of the documents reviewed by the study team were:

- Mission Country Strategy (1998-2001);
- FY 2003 Results Review/Resource Request (February 26, 2001);
- Performance Monitoring Plan; and
- Background information including the United Nations Development Programme's Country Reports for Bulgaria.

The study team conducted individual interviews and group sessions with the following relevant stakeholders (see Annex B):

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<sup>9</sup> USAID/Bulgaria, *FY 2003 Results Review and Resource Request (R4)*, February 26, 2001.

- Mission staff including all Strategic Objective (SO) teams;
- Majority of implementing partners;
- Women’s nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and
- Other donor organizations in Bulgaria, including World Bank, Soros Foundation, and UNDP.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This Gender Plan of Action was guided by the *1996 USAID Gender Plan of Action*<sup>10</sup> and the *USAID Europe and Eurasia (USAID/E&E) Bureau’s Strategic Framework*. The latter states that “the United States foreign policy interests in the region include the integration of gender considerations in policies and programs in order to promote equal access and opportunities, equal rights, and equal protection in its assistance programs.” The USAID/E&E Bureau strategy paper, *Mainstreaming Gender: More Effective and Better-targeted Development*,<sup>11</sup> emphasizes that “integrating gender considerations will accelerate and strengthen the economic and political reform process.”

The proposed Gender Plan of Action also was guided by USAID’s conceptual framework for mainstreaming gender, as summarized below:

- Including or addressing gender issues results in more effective and efficient development.
- Gender is not another word for women; rather, it means assessing the issues for men, as well as women, as the issues relate to proposed programs and projects.
- Mainstreaming gender means identifying and analyzing potential gender differences and integrating them throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and projects.

This proposed Gender Plan of Action also takes into account the Agency guidelines on planning and procurement—Automated Directives Series (ADS) 200 and 300.<sup>12</sup> This Gender Plan of Action responds specifically to ADS 201, which calls for the analysis and decisions to be made in the planning process to assess if and how gender issues are a determinant for achieving anticipated results or program sustainability.

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<sup>10</sup> *USAID Gender Plan of Action*, March 1996. Available at website: [www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/gplana96.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/gplana96.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> *Mainstreaming Gender: More Effective and Better-targeted Development*, Valerie Estes, USAID/E&E Bureau Gender Advisor, March 2001. (see Annex C)

<sup>12</sup> ADS 200 and 300, available at the website: [www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads](http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads).

Terms used in this proposed Gender Plan of Action include:

- **Gender** refers to “the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female.”<sup>13</sup>
- **Gender integration** means “taking account of both the differences and the inequalities between men and women in program planning, implementing, and assessing.”<sup>14</sup>
- **Gender analysis** is the “methodology applied to development problems to identify and understand the dimensions and relevance of gender issues and gender-based constraints, and to undertake measures to ensure gender mainstreaming.”<sup>15</sup> Gender analysis should be included in any other analysis, evaluation, or assessment being conducted and should look at the differences between men’s and women’s roles, rights, opportunities, and constraints.

### **BULGARIA: GENERAL OVERVIEW AND GENDER CONSIDERATIONS**

Like many former socialist countries, Bulgaria’s transition to democracy and a market economy is characterized by economic incertitude, a declining confidence in nascent democratic institutions, and drastic reductions in social services. During 1991-2000, the country witnessed a drastic economic decline:

- The average salary in Bulgaria declined by as much as 40 percent;
- Household expenditures since 1990 have declined by 50 percent; and
- Real income per capita index in 1990-1997 declined by its highest level (70 percent).<sup>16</sup>

The country’s weak development performance was further illustrated in UNDP 1997 human development rankings, where Bulgaria ranked 67th out of 174 countries, behind Brazil, Ecuador, and Turkey. Among 25 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Bulgaria ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, falling into the medium human development cluster of countries along with Russia, Romania, and the Baltic countries. In 2000, Bulgaria’s economy started to show signs of recovery, coming out of its lowest performance in 1996-1997. The Bulgarian government has pursued a reform agenda to ensure the country’s accession to European Union. The country’s more than 4 percent<sup>17</sup> economic growth in 2000 seems to have resulted from the legislative reforms undertaken by the government.

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<sup>13</sup> *DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Co-operation*, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> “A Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Annex to ADS 200 Series.” The paper is being drafted and will be available in the future on the website: <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/200/ppcrefindx2.htm>

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> UNDP, *Common Country Assessment, Bulgaria, 2000*.

Although the above figures illustrate the overall development in the country, further assessment is needed to see the differential impact these economic, social, and political changes of the transition period have had on the conditions of different groups of people—in particular, men and women. At present, women make up almost half of the labor force in Bulgaria. Education levels for women are on par with their male counterparts, and overall school attendance shows a 50/50 balance between girls and boys, with women outnumbering men in the 15-18 age bracket by as two-thirds. Bulgaria's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which measures whether women are able to participate actively in economic and political life, ranks 49 among 116 countries, above Greece, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Romania, and Turkey but below Latvia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia, Croatia, Poland, and Hungary.<sup>18</sup>

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that many men and women believe the negative consequences of the transition have been gender-neutral, thus affecting women and men in the same ways and with equal strength, the following gender analysis of the socioeconomic indicators shows that the transition has differentially affected these two groups.

## Economic Transition

During the Communist era, women in Bulgaria enjoyed some of the highest employment rates of all socialist countries. According to a *2000 UNDP Common Country Assessment*, the majority of the total registered unemployed are women (54 percent), with women aged 30-44 years of age most affected (39 percent), followed by those under 24 years of age (19 percent). Women, especially those of prime age (under 29 years of age), have recently been hit hard by long-term unemployment.<sup>19</sup> In addition to women, ethnic minorities, specifically Roma and ethnic Turks, suffer from high unemployment levels and ensuing poverty. Statistical data on ethnic minorities indicate that as many as 25 percent of the poor in Bulgaria belong to ethnic minorities and of those two-thirds come from Roma population. As much as 70 percent of the Roma population is reported to be unemployed.<sup>20</sup>

Government data show that just a little over one-half of the long-term unemployed in 1993 were women. By 1996, women made up two-thirds of the long-term unemployed.<sup>21</sup> Women's increased unemployment rate is linked to the shrinking of the public sector (the major employment sector for women). The newly emerging private sector has been able to absorb only a small portion of the unemployed. In 1998, there was a general 10 percent cut in the number of public sector employees, of which the private sector absorbed less than one-fifth. Approximately 70 percent of these redundancies affected women.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. NOTE: The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) assesses some critical opportunities that women have for using their capabilities. It ranks 116 countries by three variables that reflect the participation of women in (1) political decision-making (as measured by their share of parliamentary seats), (2) their access to professional opportunities (measured by their share of administrative, managerial, professional, and technical positions) and (3) their earning power (measured by their access to jobs and wages).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Women, Law and Development, *Women's Rights Under Privatization*, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank, *Economic Report: Review of 1999 and Recent Developments*, Sofia, 2000.

Because women need to provide for their families (in many cases as heads of households and single parents), they are more inclined to take any available jobs. As a result, they increasingly take jobs for which they are overqualified and sometimes accept work without a formal labor agreement. In many cases, they become engaged in small-scale livelihood-supporting activities in the informal sector. These circumstances inevitably put women in disadvantaged positions, which lead to loss of job security, lack of labor protection, and lack of state employment benefits.

According to a UNDP report, two-thirds of Bulgaria's poor are women. In December 1997, the average income of households headed by women was BGL 62.4, less than one-third the BGL 196.0 level for male households.<sup>23</sup> With less property, less savings, and lower salaries, female-headed households, including the elderly and single mothers, are poorer than male households. Contributing to the growing number of female-headed households is the proportion of children born outside of marriage (one of the highest in Europe) and the increasing level of divorce. In many cases, where women are the sole providers of child support, the poverty level of the household is exacerbated. Furthermore, women shoulder the responsibility of raising the children and carrying out most household duties, in addition to working outside the home and maintaining an active public role. This creates a heavy triple burden for women. With a continually diminishing number of affordable child-care and health-care facilities, this poses difficult constraints for all mothers.

Women's poor economic conditions also result from the discriminatory employment practices, including unequal pay wages which were evident during the transition period. National laws appear to be in adherence with international standards and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. However, women are not beneficiaries of these laws. The inadequate implementation of the laws and poor awareness and knowledge of women about the laws that protect their rights often constrain women from fully participating in the growing market economy. A strong civil society, rule of law, and effective and accountable government institutions, primary focuses of the democratic transition, are integral components to ensure both women's and men's economic empowerment.

## **Democratic Transition**

Bulgaria's post-Communist transition from a totalitarian dictatorship to a market-oriented democratic governance in 1989 was led by a civic movement of organizations, which, through organized rallies and protests, successfully pressured the government to oust the standing president and created an opposition party from the Communist Party structures. In 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria began the arduous process of moving toward a market economy and democratic governance. Free and fair elections soon followed, coupled with a massive economic restructuring package.

Throughout the Communist period, which used a quota system to ensure that one-third of all deputies were women, women participated substantially in politics. Women were actively

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<sup>23</sup> ILO/UNDP, *Bulgaria: Women in Poverty*, 1998.



engaged at various activities of the Communist Party, from grassroots organizations to the government. These positions of power tended to represent the interests of the organization and the ruling party and did not serve the interests of the majority of women. In 1989, there was an abrupt drop in the number of women in Parliament, illustrating the “artificial” nature of the quota system and its failure to truly promote women’s political participation.<sup>24</sup> Since the transition, there appears to be a growing level of interest in politics among women. Although they have been unable to gain equal representation in political structures, women are making strides and increasing their “voices” through the newly created NGOs. These groups advocate for equal rights of women and try to influence public policy, specifically in the areas of human and labor rights, social policy, and violence against women.

Although statistics show that women’s participation in some elections has been higher than that of men’s, female representation in government institutions does not reflect the electoral ratio and is slowly decreasing. Official statistics show that women’s representation in Parliament was 10.4 percent as of June 2000—this figure compares with 14.4 percent in 1991.<sup>25</sup> In the current government, 3 out of 16 ministers are women (Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Culture, and of the Environment); 2 of the 28 District/Regional Governors are women, and 2 of the 27 administrative structures subordinated to the Council of Ministers are headed by women.<sup>26</sup> However, women account for 61 percent of the total staff of the Council of Ministers. It appears that men dominate the important division of the top executive decision-making level and women have very limited access to specialized agencies and committees.<sup>27</sup> The women who have attained powerful positions in Parliament have not initiated any special gender policies, nor do the political parties have any gender-related issues in their platforms.

At both local and national levels, women are very active in local government activities; however, women’s representation in elected positions does not adequately reflect this phenomenon. As of 2000, 17 out of 262 mayors were women and in the municipal councils, women held 42 out of 262 chairs. According to a survey conducted by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, men and women identify two primary obstacles to women’s admission to the political elite: (1) the difficult economic situation keeps women focused on family survival rather than political participation; and (2) women’s lower level of susceptibility to lobbying, formation of political caucuses, and corruption, which plays an ever-increasing role in Bulgarian political structures.<sup>28</sup>

The transition period is also marked with other socioeconomic changes in Bulgaria, including increasing crime, violence, and corruption, which affect men and women in different ways.

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<sup>24</sup> Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women’s Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women’s Rights in the Former Soviet Union and Central and South-Eastern Europe*, New York and Vienna, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> UNDP, *Common Country Assessment, Bulgaria*, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women’s Rights in the former Soviet Union and Central and South-Eastern Europe*, New York and Vienna, 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women’s Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000.

Violence against women has been identified as a pervasive and serious problem in the country. Compounded by the lack of legal protection from and corruption within government institutions, violence differentially affects women. In the increasing incidents of domestic violence, trafficking, sexual harassment, and sexual blackmail, women are the key targets. According to a publication of the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, in cases reported in the media, women were victims of violence twice as often as men.<sup>29</sup>

There also is a lack of legal protection for human rights and labor rights, especially in the area of job discrimination. Women overwhelmingly suffer from discriminatory practices in hiring practices and pay wages. Women are rejected for employment because of family responsibilities and child-bearing plans, and if a woman is over 35, employers are less likely to hire her. A recent survey of Bulgarian managers, conducted by the Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, found that of enterprises that hired personnel in the past year, 40 percent reported hiring predominantly men while 25 percent hired predominantly women. Of the firms that say they plan to hire personnel in the coming year, 37 percent reported they will hire predominantly men, whereas 17 percent will hire predominantly women. Older women face a second barrier to employment. The same survey found that 77 percent of planned hires (male and female) will be employees between the ages of 26 and 40, 6 percent will be workers under 25, and only 1 percent are expected to be hires between the ages of 41 and 55.<sup>30</sup>

According to the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, one striking deficiency in Bulgarian legislation is that there is no formal legal definition of gender discrimination, nor has a working definition been established through case law.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the lack of a provision on equal pay for equal work constitutes a shortcoming in Bulgarian legislation. Such a provision was removed from the Bulgarian legal code early in the transition period on the grounds it was a vestige of socialism and inappropriate in a market economy.<sup>32</sup> In other gender equality issue-areas, where laws do exist, they are too often overlooked and are not enforced. Commonly, employers justify discriminatory practices by stating it is an inevitable consequence of rapid privatization and structural adjustment measures. The absence of clearly defined legal provisions or case law, coupled with the high cost of legal action and the lack of knowledge and workers' experience of social and labor rights, intensifies the low rate of implementation of rights and freedoms.

As these conditions continue to persist, progress is slowly being made to alleviate the gender-based constraints described above. The government recently approved the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which is expected to be passed by Parliament next year. This bill will regulate matters concerning the equal opportunities of women and men in the

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<sup>29</sup> Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Bulgaria Gender Research Foundation, and the Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation, *Violence Against Women*, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Women, Law and Development, *Women's Rights Under Privatization*, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women's Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000

<sup>32</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in the former Soviet Union and Central and South-Eastern Europe*, New York and Vienna, 2000.

exercise of the right to work, participation in politics and government, and access to education and training, in addition to providing specific clauses that prohibit sexual harassment at work and provide for penalties. The challenge will be in setting up the governmental and nongovernmental mechanisms to ensure the implementation and enforcement of these legal rights.

Women's NGOs, a growing yet still relatively weak force in Bulgaria, have been active in the drafting of the equal opportunity law. These organizations hope to work with government institutions, at both national and local levels, to enforce the specific provisions of this law and raise awareness within the population. Several NGOs are also attempting to reverse the decline in women's levels of participation in political life since the transition.

### **Social Transition<sup>33</sup>**

After 45 years of Communism, Bulgaria was left with an ineffective social services system, which is characterized by inadequate public sector funding, a high cost of pharmaceuticals, deteriorating medical care facilities, and a declining quality of medical services. In 1999, public expenditure on social services (health and education) was 8.8 percent of gross domestic product. With tight budget constraints brought on by tough austerity measures, the state could no longer provide free and accessible health care with minimum quality assurance. The elimination of government-funded social welfare programs means many people lost access to adequate medical care. In 1997, the Human Security Survey revealed that almost 50 percent of those interviewed agreed that in the last five years the health care system had deteriorated.

The breakdown of the centralized health care system and its resulting deterioration have led to the changes in health status of men, women, and children. Key health indicators show that in 1990-1998, the birth rate declined by over 35 percent. Furthermore, overall the mortality rate increased by 15 percent, the general fertility rate decreased by 37 percent, and population growth was negative. Infant mortality has declined; however, the level of stillborn infants is on the rise, reflecting poor health status of mothers. The 1980s trend toward a higher number of abortions over births has continued. For both men and women, mortality rates as a result of "chronic conditions" are on the rise as are deaths rates from traumas. Micro-nutrient deficiencies have been identified in several population groups, including children and adolescents, pregnant women, young women (18-30 years of age), and the elderly.

Since the transition began, death rates for men and women have increased but are higher for men. Additionally, men appear to smoke in greater numbers than women, affecting men's health. In 1995, smoking was estimated to be the cause of complications for 18 percent of all male deaths and almost 40 percent of all male cancer deaths. Lung cancer mortality rates

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<sup>33</sup> The information for this section was taken from the UNDP, *Common Country Assessment*.

among men rose 20 percent between 1980 and 1995, to a rate of 60 per 100,000. Female mortality from lung cancer was still comparatively low, at 9.4 per 100,000.<sup>34</sup>

Overall, women have experienced the greatest loss in the area of child support benefits and child-care infrastructure. The closing of preschool institutions and the introduction of fees at a time of decreased household incomes tremendously increased women's reproductive workload. This ultimately limits women's participation in productive labor market and public engagement.

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<sup>34</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco and Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region*, 1997, from website: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>.



## CHAPTER TWO USAID/BULGARIA’S GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

### INTRODUCTION

The Gender Plan of Action consists of two sections:

- (1) Analysis of and recommendations for USAID/Bulgaria’s SAAs; and
- (2) Cross-cutting recommendations.

The first section provides a gender analysis for each USAID/Bulgaria’s SAA.<sup>35</sup>

### STRATEGIC ASSISTANCE AREAS

<b>SAA 1: Economic Restructuring</b>	<b>SAA 2: Democratic Transition</b>	<b>SAA 3: Social Transition</b>
<b>Goal:</b> Foster the emergence of a competitive, market-oriented economy in which the majority of economic resources is privately owned and managed.	<b>Goal:</b> Foster democratic societies and institutions, through empowerment of citizens, independent media, rule of law, and good governance.	<b>Goal:</b> Enhance the ability of all persons to enjoy a better quality of life within market economies and democratic societies.

This Gender Plan of Action is intended to promote a better understanding of gender issues in Bulgaria and their potential impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of USAID-funded activities. It responds to USAID’s guidelines regarding the requirement of gender analysis during strategic planning.<sup>36</sup> Recommendations are provided to promote the gathering and analysis of gender-relevant data in each SAA. Gender considerations in each technical sector and specific questions for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation are provided. These are particularly relevant to the new analytic work planned by the Mission in preparation for the development of the new FY 2001 country strategy.

The second section provides cross-cutting recommendations to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender into the Mission portfolio and to deepen the awareness and understanding of Mission staff and implementing partners.

<sup>35</sup> USAID/Bulgaria’s current strategic framework does not include any Strategic Objectives under the third SAA—Social Transition. Since the Mission is undertaking a review of its current framework as it develops the new country strategy, the Mission requested that the team include a section on Social Transition with an analysis of all social transition activities within the Mission.

<sup>36</sup> ADS 201.3.4.11—Technical Analysis for Strategic Plans states the requirement of gender analysis undertaken during strategic planning.

## STRATEGIC ASSISTANCE AREA 1: ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

*Goal: Foster the emergence of a competitive, market-oriented economy in which the majority of economic resources is privately owned and managed*

USAID/Bulgaria is addressing the following SOs within SAA 1:

- A. SO 1.3: *Accelerated development and growth of private enterprise in a competitive environment*
- B. SO 1.4: *A more competitive and market responsive private financial sector.*

### Background and Approaches for Gender Integration in SO 1.3

The Mission's focus in SO 1.3 is to assist Bulgaria in its development of a vibrant and sustainable private sector—specifically, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (SME).<sup>37</sup> This focus is important because a strong SME sector promotes economic expansion and job creation. This is an important factor in Bulgaria as state-owned enterprises close or downsize. Additionally, a strong SME sector increases the stability and revenues for public expenditures and social transfers. Bulgaria has made substantial movement toward creating an SME sector. The *Report on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria* shows an increase from 177,063 enterprises in 1996 to 204,845 enterprises in 1998.<sup>38</sup> The report, which is based on 1,752 interviews, states that 29 percent of surveyed enterprises are owned by women.<sup>39</sup> The report also notes that official numbers show that SMEs account for 23-27 percent of the gross added value.<sup>40</sup> If the shadow economy is used in the calculation, the SME sector would account for 35-38 percent of the gross added value.

One purpose of conducting a gender analysis of the SME sector is to help understand the differences between men- and women-owned and managed enterprises. However, not many studies conducted in this sector provide adequate information for gender analysis. For example, although the *Report on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria* provides substantial data on SMEs, including demographic data, barriers to growth, training needs, labor costs, and regional differences, much of the data available in this study are not disaggregated by sex.

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<sup>37</sup> SME is defined as micro (0-10 employees), small (11-50 employees), and medium-sized enterprises (51-250 employees).

<sup>38</sup> Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, *Report on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Gross value added is defined in the *Report on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria* as the “sum total of firms’ pretax and pre-interest operative profit (that is the actual difference between incoming and outgoing operation funds), labor expenses (including the payroll costs, social security costs, professional qualification and unemployment funds and any other due related to the payment of salaries) and the depreciation costs.”

Similarly, the two reports—*The Shadow Economy in Bulgaria*<sup>41</sup> and *Strengthening Business Associations Assisted by USAID/FLAG and Competitiveness of their Member Firms*<sup>42</sup>—do not provide sex-disaggregated data for analysis. The sex-disaggregated data on the shadow economy could have substantiated or refuted the anecdotal information, which states that a majority of enterprises in the shadow economy are women owned. These data would have provided sufficient information to such questions as, Why are their enterprises not registered? Why do they hide income? What problems do the owners face in registering their enterprises? What are the financial states of their enterprises? What are the main sources of starting capital? This information on both men- and women-owned enterprises could help shape future interventions to improve the sector.

The *Survey on Women Entrepreneurs and their Role in the Economic Transformation of Bulgaria*, completed in January 2000, is one of the few documents that provides information on women-owned and -managed enterprises.<sup>43</sup> This report is based on information from the National Statistical Institute and a nationwide survey of 340 women enterprise owners and managers. According to this report, women-owned and -managed enterprises are approximately 30 percent of the total.<sup>44</sup> It was also reported that, in 1999, the total percentage of new enterprises started by women was 40 percent (1,179 of the total new enterprises).<sup>45</sup>

The *Survey on Women Entrepreneurs and their Role in the Economic Transformation of Bulgaria*<sup>46</sup> specifically provided interesting information on women-owned and -managed enterprises:

- 33 percent of women-owned and -managed enterprises have plans to expand;
- 19.5 percent of all women-owned and managed enterprises have more than 10 employees;
- Businesswomen state they feel they have sufficient information about target internal markets. However, they feel they need more information about their competitors and intellectual property rights;

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<sup>41</sup> Harvard University and the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting and Institute for Market Economies, *The Shadow Economy in Bulgaria*, funded by USAID/Bulgaria, Sofia, October 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Strengthening Business Associations Assisted by USAID/FLAG and Competitiveness of their Member Firms*, Sofia, January 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Women Entrepreneurs and their Role in the Economic Transformation of Bulgaria*, Sofia, January 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Actual percentage of women-owned/managed enterprises reported is 31.6 percent. The difference of 2.6 percent can stem from the different time periods when the surveys were conducted.

<sup>45</sup> Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, *Report on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000.

<sup>46</sup> The *Survey on Women Entrepreneurs and their Role the Economic Transformation of Bulgaria* provides comparisons between women-owned and -managed enterprises and the overall SME sector. However, no comparisons were made between women-owned/managed enterprises and men-owned/managed enterprises.



- Almost 90 percent of Bulgarian businesswomen have never contacted the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the National SME Agency, regional development agencies, and business centers as a source of information; and
- Businesswomen encounter the same difficulties as all Bulgarian companies—that is, lack of capital, unclear legislation, and excessive bureaucracy.

SO 1.3 promotes economic growth of private enterprises and, specifically SMEs, by strengthening business practices, creating a favorable legislative and regulatory environment, and creating opportunities to access credit. SO 1.3 within USAID/Bulgaria's portfolio includes activities that increase competitiveness of specific industries, provide firm-level assistance, and implement credit programs. Following is an analysis of each of these activity areas and recommendations for mainstreaming gender.

*Competitiveness Initiative Exercise.* The Competitiveness Initiative Exercise activity is working to develop a strategic global way of thinking in selected industry clusters. It is expected that these efforts will, in turn, result in more exports and assist in preparing Bulgaria to join the European Union. The first phase of the activity, which is nearing completion, included data gathering and analysis (macro- and micro-economic analysis and benchmarking), public outreach components (more than 30 presentations and workshops for 600 people), and a national conference (held April 2001). This phase was used to gauge the demand for this type of support from various industries, create a dialogue within the industries and government on competitiveness, identify industry leaders (or champions), and create stakeholder participation. As a result, six industries—wine, tourism, apparel, high tech, processed food (canning), and agricultural processing (dairy)—were identified as potential candidates for the implementation stage. Industries were chosen for their comparative advantage in the region. It was noted that the high tech industry (software development) is male dominated and the apparel industry is female dominated in terms of ownership and labor or employees.

The second phase will provide industry specialists to two industries to identify current strategies and opportunities and will initiate a dialogue with government institutions to create a more favorable regulatory environment.

Gender analysis is important in guaranteeing sustainable and equitable results for this activity. Even though “clusters” may appear to be gender neutral when looking at them from a macro view, components and selection of industries within the activity are not neutral. If gender is not considered, components may be biased against men or women. When discussing the Competitiveness activity with representatives of the implementing agencies and USAID/Bulgaria Activity Manager, words like coaching, empowerment, and champions are used.<sup>47</sup> These words show that the activity may be creating power structures that will disenfranchise one gender. One issue to consider is whether both men and women in these selected industries consider the champions to be their leaders who

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<sup>47</sup> “Competitive Bulgaria,” presentation to USAID/Bulgaria by Martin Webber, J.E. Austin Associates, February 2001.

can represent their interests. For example, women owners within these clusters may more be interested in creating better conditions for trade within a smaller geographic area than are men owners because of lack of transportation (no vehicle or driver's license) and time (because of childcare responsibilities). The question is, Can the champion<sup>48</sup> represent the interests of industry growth for both men and women-owned enterprises?

Additionally, questions to identify other gender differences include:

- What are the criteria for identifying champions?
- Have male and female leaders within a cluster been identified and included in discussions?
- Do men and women enterprise owners within a cluster have different needs or concerns?
- Do men and women employees within a cluster have different needs or concerns?
- What was the participation level of men and women in the outreach programs?
- What is the participation level of men and women at the national conference?
- Do the staff of think-tanks, which will be used to understand the issues within the industries, recognize and represent the gender differences of men and women?

Evidence about whether there are gender issues within this activity is inconclusive. To ensure that the most effective and sustainable results are achieved, a gender analysis should be carried out.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Competitiveness Initiative Exercise:

The Competitiveness Initiative Exercise should complete a gender analysis of the two clusters selected for the implementing competitiveness phase. Analysis should consider the questions mentioned above. Interviews should be conducted with the following people (men and women) in the clusters:

- Champions;
- Think-tank staff;
- Women owners or managers;
- Men owners or managers;
- Women employees;
- Men employees;
- Government liaisons; and

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<sup>48</sup> "Champion" is understood a person who understands and supports market reforms and is willing to work for the creation of a free and competitive market.

- Associations.

The findings will help USAID/Bulgaria determine whether any gender issues could hinder the Competitiveness Initiative Exercise activity in obtaining the most effective and sustainable results.

*Firm-Level Assistance Group.* The Firm-Level Assistance Group (FLAG) activity provides demand-driven assistance to SMEs. Additionally, FLAG works on strengthening business associations. FLAG focuses its training programs and consulting activities on priority industry sectors: agribusiness, software development, light manufacturing, wood processing, and home furniture processing. FLAG is required to report on jobs created and retained, domestic sales increased, and number of companies introducing international industry standards.<sup>49</sup> In its quarterly reports, FLAG also includes information on the total number of enterprises impacted, either by direct training and consulting or by involvement in an association activity. FLAG provides information in its quarterly report on number of women-owned and -managed enterprises that were assisted and the number of female employees. For the first quarter report of FY 2001, FLAG reported that 67 women-owned or -managed enterprises were assisted. The number of total enterprises assisted and the total number of employees of these firms are not known.

A meeting held with the members of FLAG showed that the implementing partners are gathering some sex-disaggregated data. It was reported during the meeting that 33 percent of enterprises assisted were women owned or managed. The apparel industry has a high percentage of women owners, managers, and employees. No analysis was completed by FLAG regarding the type of training or consulting assistance requested by men- or women-owned or directed enterprises. This information would be useful to understand if the activity has been providing the needed assistance to both men- and women-owned enterprises and if any targeted assistance should be developed.

The partners did not have any information on the participation levels of men or women in the assisted associations. It was noted that men hold the leadership positions within the associations. In addition, FLAG was approached by a local group of women with a proposal to create of an association of women in agriculture and will provide funding for a consultant to assist with the association's organizational development and needs assessment. This activity has far-reaching impact on both men and women. It would be beneficial to capture and report sex-disaggregated data on women's involvement in the agricultural sector.

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<sup>49</sup> Reporting is based only on priority industry clusters.

Recommendations for Gender Integration in FLAG:

FLAG provides quantitative data in its quarterly reports on how its activities have used men and women. Additionally, the following sex-disaggregated data should be provided in the quarterly reports:

- Total number of firms assisted (number of men or women owned);
- Total number of jobs created (number of males or females);
- Total number of jobs created by women-owned or -managed enterprises (number of male or female);
- Total number of jobs created by men-owned or -managed enterprises (number of male or female);
- Total number of business associations assisted (percent of men and women members in the associations); and
- Total number of women’s business associations assisted disaggregated by type of association.

Qualitative analysis of the sex-disaggregated data should be included in the quarterly reports if any issues are identified or noted. Analysis should include types of assistance (training or consulting) requested and used by both men- and women-owned or managed enterprises. Targeted assistance should be used when a need is identified, and not met currently, by men- or women-owned or directed enterprises.

*Credit Activities.* USAID/Bulgaria funds three activities that work to provide increased access to credit for SMEs. Job creation is seen as one benefit from the growth of the SMEs resulting from use of credit.

During the fourth quarter of 2000, the Nachala Cooperative provided 418 loans (43.78 percent to women-owned enterprises). This program has three levels: loans below \$1,500 provided with 4-5 guarantors, loans between \$1,500-3,000 with 4-5 guarantors and collateral of equipment or vehicle, and loans over \$3,000 with collateral of house or apartment. Total value of the loans disbursed to women-owned enterprises is \$1,844,047, or 42.01 percent of total. Information was not sex disaggregated further to note any differences between men- and women-owned enterprises regarding the size of enterprise, repayment periods, average loan size, use of funds, or type of enterprises. At the request of one partner—Opportunity International—the Executive Director of the cooperative had recently completed a survey on staffing, board of directors, salary level, and gender policies. It was reported that of the 31 professional staff, 23 were women, including the 2

loan supervisors. The report stated that there were no noticeable differences between profiles of male or female loan clients. However, data were not provided to substantiate this statement. One area that needs further assessment is how women and men are differently affected by collateral requirements for loan approval. In another study, 40 percent of women enterprise owners reported collateral was a problem. Comparable data for men-owned enterprises were not available.<sup>50</sup>

From October 1 to December 31, 2000, Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) credit activity disbursed 502 loans with a total value of \$240,389.<sup>51</sup> Approximately 40 percent of the loan clients are women. This activity provides loans between \$250 and \$2,000 to three communities. The loan program used the village banking method in which three to four people guarantee the loan and no collateral is required. As with the Nachala Foundation's activity, sex-disaggregated data are not collected other than on percentage of women loan clients. The CRS Country Representative recently held a discussion with staff members about gender issues in Bulgaria and, specifically, in the credit activity. Staff members discussed reproductive health issues for women, but no concrete conclusions were reached. Based on the discussion, the CRS Country Representative decided that a gender awareness-raising component will be planned in the future for the staff.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Credit Activities:

All credit programs should provide qualitative data in their quarterly reports, including success stories, best practices in mainstreaming gender, and examples about how the credit programs' outreach efforts include both men and women. Additionally, implementing partners should be requested to report on any gender issues identified and addressed.

The following sex-disaggregated quantitative data should be used to monitor the opportunities and constraints men and women face in acquiring loans. If discrepancies are noted, analysis of the issue should be carried out and monitored. For example, if female clients are denied loans at a higher rate, an analysis of the reasons could include noting if women have a more difficult time finding guarantors. Are women or men more likely to restructure their loans? What are the reasons? What is the average size of the loan for male and female clients? If men or women have a lower average size, is it because of problems accessing collateral required for the larger loans? These are examples of questions to be asked when a discrepancy in the qualitative data is noted. Based on the analysis, measures can be taken to mitigate some of the gender-based constraints that inhibit women from having access to credit. The following are the quantitative data all credit programs should include in their quarterly reports:

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<sup>50</sup> Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Women Enterprises and their Role in the Economic Transformation of Bulgaria*, Sophia, January 2000.

<sup>51</sup> Data taken from the CRS' *Quarterly Report, October-December 2000*.

- Number of loans disbursed (men or women clients)—all activities are already reporting on this information;
- Number of people applying for loans (men or women);
- Percent change of loans to men/women clients (monthly change);
- Average size of loans (men or women clients);
- Average number of employees (men- or women-owned enterprises);
- Number of loan denied (men or women clients);
- Number of loans 1-30 days and 31-90 days, late (men or women clients);
- Number of loans restructured (men or women clients);
- Number of non-performing loans (men or women clients);
- Repayment rate (men and women clients);
- Number of loan officers (men or women); and
- Number of managers (men or women).

### **Background and Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 1.4**

The activities under SO 1.4—A more competitive and market responsive private financial sector—include bank privatization and supervision, a commercial bankers training program, and the strengthening of Bulgaria’s capital market.<sup>52</sup> A meeting was held with the Activity Managers and all the implementing partners in this SO to discuss related issues to be addressed under this SO. Questions were raised to identify gender issues in the Bulgarian financial sector. One implementing partner stated there are issues of differential pay for men and women, sexual harassment, and discrimination against women within the financial sector. Some attendees thought working on these issues was not within their scope of work for the USAID-funded activities. Note, however, that it is important to include gender sensitivity training in any management courses funded by USAID/Bulgaria.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in SO 1.4:

Implementing partners should be requested to use and report on sex-disaggregated people-level indicators including the number of people trained. When appropriate, management training classes should include gender-sensitivity training.

#### *Recommendations for Gender Integration in Planned Assessments*

*Agriculture, Credit, and Firm-Level Assistance Assessments.* A USAID team will complete an internal assessment of the microcredit, SME development, and firm-level assistance activities in July 2001. Additionally, the team will evaluate the agricultural sector in Bulgaria and recommend possible areas for USAID’s assistance.

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<sup>52</sup> At the request of the Mission, the pension and health reform activities will be analyzed under section SAA III—Social Transition.

The following are recommended readings for the team, people to be interviewed, and questions to be raised so gender issues can be identified and discussed.

### Readings<sup>53</sup>

- Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Gender Entrepreneurship and the Role of Women in the Economic Transformation*, Sofia, January 2000.
- Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women's Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000 (hard copy in Mission Program Office); and
- *Creating of an Association of Women in Agriculture* paper; consultant will be used by FLAG to conduct an analysis.

### Interviewees

- Genoveva Tisheva, Executive Director, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Sofia, Tel: 980-88-01, email: tishev@sf.icn.bg; and
- Maria Zagorska, Rural Women's Clubs, 2-310-936, e-mail: mzagorska@usa.net.

### Questions

The following questions should be asked of stakeholders (men and women) in each sector:

- How might the problems of men and women be different in this sector?
- What are men's and women's participation levels in the activities?

Indicative questions to be addressed under specific sectors are the following. It is important to interview men and women separately to understand if there are any differences.

- **Firm-Level Assistance:** Do men- and women-owned enterprises have different training or consulting needs? If so, has FLAG identified and addressed these needs? Are women and men equally involved in FLAG-assisted business associations? Are men- and women-owned enterprises participating equally in the use of consultants? What are men and women's participation in management levels within FLAG and as consultants? Does FLAG work with any women's business associations? Are there benefits to working with women's business associations?
- **Credit:** Do men and women (SMEs) have equal access to loans within cooperative programs? Do men and women have equal access to credit (micro, small, and medium-sized) loans within bank-led programs? Do men or women have a difficulty

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<sup>53</sup> These documents can be found on the Mission Gender drive.

finding guarantors or accessing collateral? Are banks or loan officers biased against men or women?

- **Agriculture:** What are men's and women's roles (own land, work land, harvest, sell products, and work in or own a small enterprise that processes products) within the agricultural sector in Bulgaria? In what areas do men and women in agriculture want support?

Some relevant issues within gender analysis to identify differences between men and women include the access and control of resources and gender roles, rights, and responsibilities. For example, are women often unable to attend a training event because of childcare responsibilities or do women-owned enterprises (which may make up a majority of the shadow economy) have access to credit?

*Banking Sector Assessment.* The assessment focuses on an evaluation of the banking system in Bulgaria, analysis of USAID's contribution, and identification of needs for future programs. Recommendations should include analysis of the participation levels of men and women in the overall review of a bank's structure, including the number of men and women in decision-making positions. Additionally, when microeconomic elements (saving, credit, and lending) are addressed, gender differences should be noted and analyzed.

## **STRATEGIC ASSISTANCE AREA 2: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION<sup>54</sup>**

*Goal: Foster democratic societies and institutions through empowerment of citizens, independent media, rule of law, and good governance*

USAID/Bulgaria is addressing the following SOs within SAA 2:

- A. *SO 2.1: Increased better-informed citizens' participation in political and economic decision-making*
- B. *SO 2.2: Legal systems that better support democratic processes and market reforms*
- C. *SO 2.3: More effective, responsive and accountable local governance.*

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<sup>54</sup> In April 2001, the Democracy and Governance sector conducted an assessment of its entire portfolio in preparation for a new Democracy and Governance strategy.



## Background and Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 2.1

The Mission's focus, under this SO, is to help build the capacity of NGOs to play a key role in facilitating broad public participation in policy and decision making.

Strengthening independent broadcast media is another key result that will contribute to the achievement of SO 2.1. The gender analysis of the three programs under this SO is illustrated below.

### *Sustainable Indigenous NGO Development*

To support the objectives of democracy and human rights, one primary focus of this strategic area is to establish a strong and flourishing civil society, in which citizens help identify economic needs; freely debate political, economic, and social issues; and mobilize self-help efforts. USAID will help to empower citizens to understand their roles and responsibilities in a participatory democracy, make informed choices, and take initiative.<sup>55</sup>

Despite difficult conditions confronting the development of NGOs, including the absence of a participatory political culture, scarce resources, and a shortage of requisite organizational and management skills, women in Bulgaria have taken the initiative in the development of NGOs as an alternative outlet for civic interest in social development. This places women at the forefront of social change.<sup>56</sup> At present, 11 percent of U.S. government funds allocated for the NGO sector are awarded to organizations that focus on the protection of women's rights.<sup>57</sup> Although a small yet-vocal percentage of NGOs address women's issues directly, women also play a prominent role in NGOs that represent varying other sectors.

Some NGOs work exclusively to promote women issues such as women's economic empowerment, health, legal rights, and legislative lobbying. Others address women's concerns and gender-based constraints within the overall context of their programs. Addressing gender does not necessarily entail supporting women-focused NGOs, a commonly held misperception. It does mean supporting NGOs that recognize that problems of men and women may differ, as will subsequent solutions. For example, a subgrant from an intermediary support organization, the Bulgarian Charities Aid Foundation, went to a social safety net improvement organization, Center "Maria," to develop programs on violence against women in the city of Gorna Oryahovisa. The foundation is not a woman's NGO; however, it provides subgrants and training to organizations working on gender issues. For this reason, an analysis of the specific

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<sup>55</sup> USAID, *From Transition to Partnership A Strategic Framework for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia*, 1999.

<sup>56</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in the former Soviet Union and Central and South-Eastern Europe*, New York and Vienna, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Institute for Marketing and Social Surveys, "Non-Governmental Organizations in Bulgaria," March 2001, Sofia (draft).

breakdown of activities in which partner intermediary support organizations are engaged would be useful. This information would shed light on the issues being addressed and funded through USAID and help determine whether they take into consideration the differing ways in which problems, solutions, and projects affect men and women.

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) reports a solid proportion of Democracy Network (DemNet) staff members are women; in fact, out of 13 intermediary support organizations currently funded through the DemNet activity, at least five are run by females. However, men run all three DemNet-funded think-tanks. Although evidence is inconclusive about whether men dominate the majority of think-tanks outside the DemNet circle, it highlights a potentially relevant point. Increasingly, think-tanks are given roles in policy analysis and review that translate into greater participation in policy dialogues and, hence, a stronger voice in policy decision making. If one gender or the other dominates this sector, it could lead to unequal access to the political agenda.

A more in-depth analysis, using data that disaggregate public participation by sex in NGO activity, including staffing, volunteerism, awareness, and impact, would be helpful in understanding the relative impacts of civil society on men and women. It would additionally underscore the relative contributions of women and men in developing civil society.<sup>58</sup> These two issues are instrumental in understanding whether civil society is benefiting women and men equally. This information will become particularly more important as the sector starts moving from primarily charity- and donation-based organizations to those that take on citizen social services and critical issue-areas, such as human rights and civil rights protection. These issues are cornerstones of a sustainable democratic transition and, as such, require participation from the entire population.

Another point, as stated by the Director of ISC, is that Bulgarian NGOs generally do not perceive gender to be an issue. Illustrating this, she mentioned that when a committee of individuals from DemNet NGOs carried out the modification of the self-assessment tool to fit the Bulgarian context, gender was taken out of the assessment because it was seen as irrelevant to the Bulgarian context. This in itself sends a strong signal that there is a need for increased gender awareness among individuals in the civil society sector and in society as a whole.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Sustainable Indigenous NGO Development:

- Modify the existing NGO sustainability index to include an additional category, “inclusiveness”; inclusiveness (notably women, children, youth, and marginalized communities) will measure the composition of the staff and volunteers as well as participants in NGO activities.

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<sup>58</sup> Please see attached USAID, E & E Bureau, Handout on *Lessons and Transition: Gender Issues in Civil Society Development*, 2000.

- Integrate gender awareness issues into training curricula and processes for intermediary support organizations.
- Conduct a gender analysis of ISC sub-grantee activities. This analysis should include a quantitative breakdown of activities per sector and a qualitative component to elucidate specific and relevant observations.

### *Independent Media*

USAID/Bulgaria’s independent media program has been effective in supporting media legislation and regulatory frameworks, training Bulgarian media professionals, and strengthening of independent media associations. On the surface, it appears that in the media there is no differentiation, in composition and in the effects of their reporting, by gender. Freedom House reports that more than 50 percent of the journalists are women.<sup>59</sup> However, within the power structures of the media, especially the broadcast media, men tend to gravitate toward management positions and women toward journalism and editorial positions.

According to ProMedia, journalism has traditionally been seen as a “female” profession. So much so that according to the Director, in ProMedia training programs, broadcast and editing training are often attended only by women, whereas management training falls into the “males only” category. This separation of powers or interests could stem from gender stereotypes that dictate both men’s and women’s choices in life. Stereotypes—such as managers have to be aggressive to succeed; women are not aggressive by nature, and, therefore, women cannot succeed as managers—are common.<sup>60</sup> The strong backlash against the Communist era, when forced egalitarianism was the norm, has led to a reluctance among society to acknowledge gender differences and how problems, opportunities, and solutions may differ between genders.

While looking into the issues of gender and media, the study team did not come across a study or information that examined gender in the media, what stories are covered, and how and whether stereotypes are promulgated. Nonetheless, issues such as violence against women are slowly attracting media attention. Just recently, a small village radio station from the northwest received an award for public interest talk shows on gender-based violence. As the linkages between NGOs and the media become stronger and societal problems gain prominence in public debate, there should be more of an opportunity for issues, such as gender, to gain media attention. It is important that those involved in the media have a strong enough awareness of gender issues and handle them appropriately.

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<sup>59</sup> Freedom House, *Nations in Transit, Bulgaria*, 2000.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 1999.

Recommendations for Gender Integration in the Independent Media:

- Continue to emphasize and support linkages between media and NGOs, which could lead to greater awareness of social issues, both within the media and society as a whole.
- Train NGOs and particular advocates for women’s rights in the effective use of media for public awareness and increased visibility of gender issues.
- Investigate the possibility of incorporating a gender-awareness module into the broadcast media training. Training could include a component on exploring gender stereotypes in the Bulgarian media.
- Promote gender balance in the management training in media.

*Political Process*<sup>61</sup>

The short-term Civic-Led Voter Education and Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns, organized in preparation for the parliamentary elections in June 2001, are taking a proactive approach to target women, youth, Turks, Roma, and other historically underrepresented constituencies. Activities include a preliminary testing of political messages, voter education, GOTV campaigns, candidate-voter forums and first time voter seminars, production and circulation of voter education materials, and a post-election roundtable.

The Political Party Assistance Program, like the above campaigns, is a short-term activity that aims to improve the practices of the major political parties by (1) designing platforms that are more responsive to citizens interests; (2) developing more effective strategies for communicating those platforms; and (3) organizing more effective national campaigns.

Recommendations for Gender Integration in Political Process:

- Ensure that in public opinion polling, data are sex disaggregated in the Political Party Assistance Program activity. There is a paucity of data on women’s voting patterns, and this information would be highly useful in analyzing the voting behavior of men and women.
- Request, if possible, that the implementing partner of the Civic-Led Voter Education and Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns include in the final report a

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<sup>61</sup> As these are short-term activities, which are already mid-term and may not be extended in the new strategy, the study team did not conduct a gender analysis of these activities. However, available data illustrate low levels of women’s political participation, which suggests the need for activities related to gender and political representation.

gender analysis of the completed activities. Women are a target community, so it would be beneficial to understand:

- What messages persuade women to vote?
- What issues do women prioritize?
- Do these differ by gender?

## **Background and Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 2.2**

### *Legislative Strengthening*

USAID anticipates launching an extensive legislative-strengthening program. This comprehensive effort will be initiated with a needs assessment in 2001. As a prelude to this assessment, concepts and recommendations that should be taken into consideration when addressing gender in a legislative-strengthening activity are presented below.

With the passing of the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men, the Government of Bulgaria will be required to establish within the government a “National Machinery,” which will serve as the prime coordinating body responsible for mainstreaming gender into government institutions. The Ministry of Labor, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women shall elaborate, coordinate, and implement the national policy for the provision of equal opportunities for men and women. This bill, which is expected to pass in fall 2001, provides a unique opportunity to instigate a proactive, multisector approach to ensure effective and efficient implementation and enforcement of this important legislation.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Legislative Strengthening:

- Create a multi-sectoral policy dialogue on the relationship between the Copenhagen Criteria, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and other international human rights instruments and gender equity legislation (such as the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men) in Bulgaria and abroad.
- Organize and conduct seminars and workshops for political parties and members of Parliament and the NGO community on special measures for gender equity such as quota systems, the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men, and ombudspersons, including an explanation of experiences from other countries.
- Investigate the possibility of providing technical assistance to the National Machinery to strengthen its capacity and thus promote gender mainstreaming within government institutions.

- With the anticipated creation of a National Machinery, the Mission should develop links with staff National Machinery to fully understand the government's gender activity issues, facilitate cooperation among all actors—government, implementing partners, local NGOs, and other relevant organizations—and measure public sector commitment to addressing gender issues.

### *Rule of Law and Judicial Reform*

The focus of legal and judicial reform activities is to support efforts to establish the rule of law, including activities to protect civil, political, and property rights and to place limits on the arbitrary actions of government.<sup>62</sup>

For the most part, the foundations of rule of law in Bulgaria have been established. As a signatory to CEDAW and other protective international treaties, the fundamental de jure rights of women (specifically under CEDAW) and men are protected under the provisions of Bulgarian law. However, there is weak implementation of these laws and few enforcement mechanisms to ensure the de facto rights of men and women. There is no separate provision proclaiming the equality between men and women and no general anti-discrimination legislation. There is also no special legislation on the equal treatment and equal opportunities of both sexes.

Furthermore, although the Bulgarian government ratified CEDAW in 1981 and entered it into force in 1982 as a result of a clause in the Bulgarian Constitution, the terms of CEDAW have not yet been applied because they do not take priority if they contradict national legislation. The referenced clause states that to supersede domestic law in cases of contradiction an international agreement must concurrently be ratified, have entered into force, and published in the State gazette. Bulgaria has not yet met the third of these requirements. The Bulgarian government submitted second and third periodic reports on CEDAW, wherein the representative of the government expressed the concern that Bulgarian society has continued in the Communist tradition of having de jure but not de facto equality for women. The representative also expressed the government's commitment to take further measures to improve the de facto situation of women in line with the Convention.<sup>63</sup>

Given the plethora of anecdotal evidence pointing to the gender-differentiation in hiring practices, wage gaps, sexual harassment, and overall discrimination in the workforce, there appears to be a need for anti-discrimination legislation along with effective enforcement mechanisms. Further, little legislation exists regarding domestic violence. Where in theory international statutes could override or substitute for the lack of

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<sup>62</sup> USAID, *From Transition to Partnership A Strategic Framework for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia*, 1999.

<sup>63</sup> The information on Bulgaria's ratification and implementation of CEDAW was taken from the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights publication, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in the former Soviet Union and Central and South-Eastern Europe*, New York and Vienna, 2000.

Bulgarian laws, lawyers and judges have little experience handling discrimination and domestic violence cases and are therefore uncertain how to apply international statutes to these topics. The lack of established case law, or even a formal legal definition of discrimination, further hampers legal action on this matter.<sup>64</sup>

In response to the above claims, the Bulgarian government recently approved a bill, the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which Parliament is expected to pass next year. The bill regulates matters concerning the equal opportunities of women and men in the exercise of the right to work, in participation in politics and government (including provisions for quotas), and in access to education. Specific clauses address sexual harassment and negative stereotyping of male and female roles.

Bulgaria's judiciary is approximately two-thirds women; out of 25 members of the Supreme Judicial Council, 8 are women. The distribution of prosecutors by sex is even; however, investigators are primarily men and court administrators are almost entirely women. This phenomenon is more easily understood after examining the nature of employment in the judicial sector.

In Bulgaria, where the rule of law is just now taking hold, public confidence in the judiciary is low. The judiciary is characterized by inefficiency, a lack of sufficient expertise, bureaucratic complications, and perceived corruption in the courts.

In addition, the public perception that judges are the "puppets" of the government still lingers from the Communist period. As civil servants, judges and prosecutors receive modest salaries, much less than those of lawyers in the private sector. However, unlike private solicitors, the judiciary enjoys a high level of job security, with little or no fear of layoffs. In economically trying times when job insecurity is rampant, a steady and secure salary takes priority over prestige, especially for women. There is no concrete evidence, however, whether the overwhelmingly large number of women in the judiciary has any impact on the implementation of the rule of law.

USAID/Bulgaria's judicial reform activities focus on increasing the professionalism of the judiciary and improving court administration. Technical assistance is provided to identify and promote legislative and administrative reforms and institutional capacity building. Implementing partners indicate that the gender ratio of individuals participating in training activities mirrors the gender make-up of the judicial system—that is, women predominate. A component of the Magistrates Training Center project trains judges in various areas, including ethics and new legislation. For example, in 2001 the project will train judges in the provisions of the "right to private life." Until now, the Magistrates Training Center has not directly addressed gender-sensitive legislation in any of its training components.

In response to issues that arose over the course of its work, ABA/CEELI (SO 1.3) has started to address gender issues in its project. As a preliminary activity, ABA/CEELI, in

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<sup>64</sup> Women, Law and Development International, *Women's Rights Under Privatization*, Sofia, 1999.

association with lawyers, NGOs, and some government representatives, has formed working groups to address domestic violence and trafficking of women, two areas where there is no protective legislation. Thus far, the working groups have drafted legislation on both issues; however, because working-group members participate on a voluntary basis and are employed on a full-time basis elsewhere, the process has been slow. USAID/Bulgaria asked ABA/CEELI to develop a concept paper regarding gender issues to understand the issues at hand and to devise possible future projects.

Among implementing partners and NGOs, there appears to be a general consensus regarding the insufficient implementation and enforcement of laws for both men and women. Therefore, in addition to increasing the institutional capacity of the legal system, attention must be paid to developing the mechanisms to ensure proper enforcement of laws. This process can begin by creating awareness within the judicial system of the pertinent issues and laws, both those contained in the Bulgarian legal code and those in international conventions to which Bulgaria is a signatory. According to a Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development survey of the legal field, every lawyer, judge, and legal advisor interviewed believes that further information and training are required.<sup>65</sup> Most have no experience handling discrimination cases, and they are uncertain of how to apply international statutes to this topic.

A representative from the Magistrates Training Center suggested that the high costs associated with legal action and the lack of competent public defenders often dissuade victims of domestic violence and private criminal procedures from following through with their cases. Legal advisors are appointed to individuals with “private accuser complaints,” including theft and battery, but these individuals are not familiar with domestic violence cases; are overburdened; and, as anecdotal evidence infers, often talk the victims out of following through with their complaints.

An additional hindrance deterring individuals from pursuing legal action is the high cost associated with legal suits in Bulgaria. The State does not provide public defenders except under extraordinary instances in criminal cases, making it almost impossible for men and women, alike, to seek legal recourse. A Bulgarian female worker recalled, “When my contract was wrongly terminated, I tried to seek my rights....I went to the first lawyer’s office I saw and told him just how it was. Then he took out a notebook: 100DM fee for this, 30DM for that, half a million. Where from?”<sup>66</sup>

Women’s lack of awareness about the discriminatory practices makes the situation even more difficult to handle. A study of discriminatory practices in Bulgaria reported that men are almost twice as active as women in their efforts to seek resolutions of their social problems.<sup>67</sup> Although this statement is inconclusive, anecdotal evidence suggests that many individuals, particularly women, are unaware of their rights. When the high costs of

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<sup>65</sup> Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Gender Entrepreneurship and the Role of Women in the Economic Transformation in Bulgaria*, 2000.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Institute for Marketing and Social Surveys, “NGOs in Bulgaria,” 2001(draft).



legal services are factored into the equation, the possibility that individuals will seek out their legal rights remains dim.

Recommendations for Gender Integration in Rule of Law and Judicial Reform:

- Integrate a gender awareness component into legal training for judges, prosecutors, police (in future), and administration, where appropriate. Consider educating judges and prosecutors on international human rights statutes.
- Mount public information campaigns via the media on the draft civil code items promoting gender equity (Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men, Domestic Violence Draft Law, and Child Protection Act).
- Organize workshops with relevant stakeholders (NGOs, unions, associations, government officials, national and local implementing partners, relevant donors, and Department of Justice) to ensure the effective implementation of the new Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men (when passed) and the Child Protection Act.
- Increase assistance to NGOs and associations (for example, women lawyer associations) that participate in the implementation of the new laws (through advocacy, research, and provision of legal literacy consultation to women).
- Investigate the possibility of starting a legal center, which could offer legal consultations at no or low cost to women with low incomes on the many issues pertaining to gender.

### *Corruption*

Although the Coalition 2000 program is in the completion phase, a follow-on effort will continue to raise public awareness of corruption in specific target areas. Based on demand, USAID envisions selected technical assistance to the central government to support its internal anti-corruption initiatives.<sup>68</sup>

Corruption in Bulgaria has been identified by Bulgarians as one of the most pervasive societal problems. Plaguing the economic, political, and administrative spheres of life, it affects society in its entirety and infringes on the livelihood of millions. To date, little research exists on the linkage between gender and corruption. In 1999 two studies, conducted by the World Bank and the University of Maryland, investigated the relationship between corruption and gender and arrived at similar conclusions. The studies concluded that women are less likely to condone corruption, women managers are less involved in bribery, and countries that have greater representation of women in public life have lower levels of corruption. This conclusion supports the hypothesis that, at least in the short run, increased presence of women in public life may reduce levels of

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<sup>68</sup> USAID, R4 2001.

corruption.<sup>69</sup> Although these studies do not provide enough empirical evidence to substantiate this hypothesis, it poses many intriguing questions: In Bulgaria,

- (1) Are corruption activities gender specific?
- (2) Do perceptions of corruption differ between genders?
- (3) Do men's and women's ideas of how corruption should be combated differ?

Unfortunately, COALITION 2000's corruption assessment report has been completed, and although the data were age disaggregated they were not sex disaggregated.<sup>70</sup> Sex-disaggregated data might have provided a useful dimension to understanding the corruption phenomenon, including how it affects government officials, business people, the judiciary, and the Bulgarian population as a whole. USAID should consider these issues when designing future corruption activities. Furthermore, as the Coalition 2000 model has now been replicated in other transition countries through the Southeast European Legal Development Initiative (SELDI), there is still an opportunity in these countries to address these issues.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Corruption:

- Investigate the possibility of conducting a small survey to gain insights into the relationship between gender and corruption in Bulgaria. This information may prove useful when conducting public awareness campaigns. Are corruption activities gender specific? Do perceptions of corruption differ between genders? Do men's and women's ideas of how corruption should be combated differ? Are women and men affected differently by corruption?
- Explore opportunities to incorporate gender in corruption activities under the regional initiative, SELDI.

## **Background and Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 2.3**

### *Local Government Reform*

Using a cross-sectoral and multi-level approach, local governance activities promote practical means for mobilizing local resources, addressing social welfare issues, stimulating local economic development, restructuring of municipal utilities and improved service delivery, establishing fiscal federalism, and promoting political consensus for reform. The strategy depends on creating successful partnerships among

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<sup>69</sup> World Bank, Development Research Group/Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Group, *Are Women Really the Fairer Sex? Corruption and Women in Government*, 1999 and Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector, *Gender and Corruption*, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Information regarding the surveys was gathered in a meeting with Coalition 2000.

government, citizen groups, and the private sector at the local, regional, and national levels.<sup>71</sup>

In the third phase of the Local Government Initiative (LGI 3), activities will continue to focus on local government policy agendas, with more direct emphasis on fiscal decentralization and increasing citizen participation in local government structures. Although citizens' ratings of local government performance are increasing, participation in local government activities is steadily decreasing. There appears to be no differentiation by sector in interest in local government; in fact, in some elections, women voters have turned out in higher numbers than men. However, female representation in local government structures, although higher than at the national level, does not reflect the electoral ratio. At present, in elected positions, 6.5 percent (17 out of 262) of mayors and 16 percent of chairs of municipal councils are women (42 out of 262), compared with 21 percent in 1997. Although these figures for both mayoral and council positions have dropped, anecdotal evidence suggests that women are increasingly active in local government activities.

Completed in early 2001, the Club "Economika 2000" survey, which reports on citizens' ratings of local government accountability, effectiveness, and responsiveness, concluded that the results do not provide grounds for considering that social-demographic factors, such as gender, age, and education, essentially influence the provided evaluations. The report recommends that future efforts target the entire population, not separate groups of the population. However, later in the report, a gender analysis suggests that men are more informed about life in municipalities and have a clearer vision about the development of the municipalities than women, although women participate more actively in the local events.<sup>72</sup> Thus, either women are less interested or have less time to become informed about life in the municipalities (although they participate more actively) or attempts to inform the public about key issues are differentially reaching men and women. This issue needs to be further examined to identify the reasons why women are less informed about local government and to identify proper interventions.

LGI activities in the past year have begun work on increasing women's participation in and knowledge of local government issues. An LGI intermediary support organization, The National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB), is leading the way in these activities. Collaborating with other NGOs, NAMRB has organized training for female local leaders in skills such as leadership, lobbying, networking, participatory approaches, and legislative drafting. A regional conference was held on gender issues at the local level, which led to the formation of a specialized commission on women's participation in local self-government. Last year, this commission met with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy three times and actively collaborated with the national government and NGOs to draft the Equal Opportunity Act

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<sup>71</sup> USAID, *From Transition to Partnership, The Strategic Framework for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia*, 1999.

<sup>72</sup> Club "Economika 2000," *Citizens Rating of Local Government Accountability, Effectiveness and Responsiveness*, 2001.

for Women and Men. Similar collaboration was evidenced in the drafting of the Children’s Defense Law, which protects orphans and minority children.

Many of the female local government representatives come from rural areas that have little contact with or influence on national policy-making, so this conference was a unique opportunity for them to voice their opinions and develop ties at the national level. NAMRB intends to continue its work with the Commission and is planning a study tour in the United States for female local government officials. In addition, the commission, in conjunction with NGOs, is devising strategies at the local level to ensure the proper enforcement mechanisms when and if the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men is passed.

As local governments become more responsible for the provision of public services, there is an increasing need for good governance. Good governance addresses the allocation and management of resources, which respond to collective problems. It is characterized by participation, accountability, transparency, rule of law, effectiveness, and equity, including gender equity. Although interest groups, like the women-only commission, are indispensable in this process, it is important that local government institutions, combining both elected and appointed officials and civil servants, men and women alike are aware that gender issues may exist within their programs and projects.

Men and women may access and use public services differently, prioritize different issues, get informed from different sources and by different means, and even be differentially affected by local government fiscal management decisions. Furthermore, it is equally important that when issues pertaining to gender are addressed, such as the upcoming Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men, efforts are made that men and women together take part in training, conferences, and meetings so they can learn from each other’s perspectives and benefit from each other’s reactions.

Recommendations for Gender Integration in Local Government Reform:

- Modify the index of citizen ranking of local governments' responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability to include an additional category, “inclusiveness”; inclusiveness (notably women, children, youth, and marginalized communities) will measure how well local governments have done in including various groups in local government activities.
- Organize workshops, at the local level, with relevant stakeholders (NGOs, unions, associations, local government officials, and implementing partners) to ensure the effective implementation of the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men (when passed) and the Child Protection Act.
- Mount local-level public information campaigns on the draft civil code items promoting gender equity (Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men, Domestic Violence Draft Law, and Child Protection Act).

- Encourage implementing partners, when designing communication strategies to deepen citizen awareness, to examine how varying public relations strategies may differentially affect and reach both genders.
- Integrate gender-awareness issues in existing local government training and training of trainers.

## **Gender Considerations for Democracy and Governance Pre-Assessment**

The following are recommended readings for the assessment team, people to be interviewed and questions to be raised to ensure that gender issues are identified and discussed during the assessment:

### **Readings<sup>73</sup>**

- Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, *Survey on Gender Entrepreneurship and the Role of Women in the Economic Transformation*, Sofia, January 2000.
- Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women's Participation in Political Life in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2000 (hard copy in Mission Program Office).

### **Interviewees**

- Genoveva Tisheva, Executive Director, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Sofia, Tel: 980-88-01, email: tishev@sf.icn.bg;
- Regina Indjeva, Director, Women's Alliance for Development, Sofia, Tel: 980 55 32, email: wad@olb.net; and
- Kalinka Slivkova, Director, Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation, Sofia, Tel: 986 4710, email: gender@bulnet.bg.

### **Questions**

- Are the Mission's Democracy and Governance activities differentially affecting men and women? If so, how?
- Is there differential participation by men and women in the public sphere? If yes, what are the primary causes? Barriers?
- What are the relative impacts of civil society on men and women? What are the relative contributions of women and men in developing civil society?

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<sup>73</sup> These documents can be found on the Mission Gender drive.

- Do men and women play different roles in the formulation and enforcement of economic and social policies?
- Do men and women have equal legal rights, de jure and de facto? Is one gender more aware of its rights than the other?
- What is the government's view of and approach to gender issues (i.e., Equal Opportunities Act)? Do the approaches vary depending on the gender of the official?

### **STRATEGIC ASSISTANCE AREA 3: SOCIAL TRANSITION**

*Goal: Enhance the ability of all persons to enjoy a better quality of life within market economies and democratic societies.*

USAID/Bulgaria's current strategic framework does not include any SO under the third SAA—Social Transition. Since the Mission is reviewing its current framework as it develops a new country strategy, the Mission requested that the study team include a section on social transition with an analysis of all social transition activities within the Mission. The SOs under USAID/E&E Bureau's SAA 3 include:

- A. SO 3.2: Increased promotion of good health and access to quality health care; and
- B. SO 3.4: Mitigation of adverse social impacts of the transition to market-based democracies.

### **Background/Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 3.2**

#### *Health Care Reform*

USAID/Bulgaria's Healthcare Financing Program is focused on strengthening the National Health Insurance Fund. Components of the activity include establishing procedures for health providers, including accurate data systems and sound asset management. Additionally, the activity is assisting the Ministry of Health to design and implement a national health campaign focused on informing people about the system, what services are provided, their rights, and the cost of these services.

The program is focused on getting citizens to use a general practitioner. Then, if needed, the general practitioner will refer the patient to a specialist. The number of men and women using the services of a general practitioner was not known. It would be worthwhile to initiate a study to determine the rate of usage of general practitioners and hospitals by men and women. If there are significant differences, a public awareness campaign should be developed to target populations to bring them into the system. For

example, if men are not using general practitioners and go directly to hospitals, a campaign should be developed targeting men.

Another part of the reform will most likely include closing hospitals. With the closure of hospitals, there will be a large number of nurses fired or laid off. Since the nursing profession is women dominated, these hospital closures will have a negative impact on women.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Health Reform:

- Gather and analyze data on male and female usage of general practitioners and hospitals. If discrepancy is noted, determine the underlying cause and, if necessary, develop and implement a targeted public awareness campaign.
- Complete an analysis of the number of men and women who will lose their jobs because of the closures of hospitals. Consideration should be given to developing a retraining program for nurses.
- Develop sex-disaggregated people-level indicators for the new framework. Because this is a new activity and indicators are being developed, it would be useful to have one or two indicators that measure either usage of general practitioners or patients' opinions on the quality of care. Sex-disaggregated data will allow for any differences to be noted and addressed.

### **Background and Approaches to Gender Integration in SO 3.4**

#### *Employment*

Employment promotes policies and programs that advance workers' rights and international labor standards, remove labor market rigidities, and assist workers in moving into jobs created by market economies.<sup>74</sup>

Employment, or the lack thereof, is a pressing issue for most Bulgarians, men and women. In addition, women and men enter the workforce in relatively equal proportions. The most recent labor statistics show that women's unemployment surpasses that of men's, and, more alarmingly, women are increasingly entering the ranks of Bulgaria's long-term unemployed.<sup>75</sup> The January-February 2001 *Early Warning Report* notes that the number of discouraged unemployed women is growing.<sup>76</sup> Labor unions are reemerging as a unifying force for workers to fight for their rights.

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<sup>74</sup> USAID, *From Transition to Partnership A Strategic Framework for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia*, 1999.

<sup>75</sup> For more detailed statistics, please see opening section on Economic Transition.

<sup>76</sup> UNDP/USAID/Soros, *Early Warning Report*, January-February 2001.

Participation in labor unions mirrors the gender make-up of the labor force. However, when looking at specific sectors that have been unionized, there is a distinct gender differentiation among sectors. Women prevail in specific sectors, such as education, light industry, ceramics, food processing, electronics, health care, textiles, and tourism. Men outnumber women in construction, heavy industry, and electricity and in gas and water supply. In Bulgaria, many of the female-dominated sectors are some of the most unionized in the country. In these sectors, specifically, women are being elected as leaders, which inevitably changes the gender dynamic of the labor unions and their activities, both traditionally led by males. Although this change does not in any way guarantee that unions are fighting for gender-specific rights such as equal pay for equal jobs and security to return to jobs after childbirth, it has led to the creation of women's committees within union structures. These committees aim to raise awareness and increase advocacy within the union, integral efforts to achieve gender-sensitive legal reforms.

The Mission's implementing partner, American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)/Solidarity Center, is working with two major unions, CL Podkreпка and CITUB, to strengthen the labor education program and the labor counseling centers. These programs aim to deliver educational seminars and counseling to leaders and rank and file members of the labor unions on issues pertinent to the transition, including privatization and economic reform, unemployment, social insurance (including pension and health care reform), collective bargaining in a free-market economy, and protection of workers' rights. The labor counseling centers also serve as a link for workers to employment, social benefits, and retraining and skill upgrading programs.

With strong ties to the international labor movement, where gender issues have gained a high profile over the past few years, the Solidarity Center is very aware of the gender issues that exist in the Bulgarian labor force. According to the Director of the Solidarity Center, women feel the disparate impacts of reforms, are more apt to enter the informal sector, accept jobs without contracts to feed their families, and are underemployed in greater numbers. In addition to issues such as discrimination and wage-gaps (see SAA 2 for discussion), companies are now finding loopholes in maternity leave laws, thus hindering an increasing number of women from exercising this legal right. Furthermore, a phenomenon common in many other countries has now emerged in Bulgaria—entrepreneurs from abroad, especially Turkey and Greece, are setting up small “sweat shops” in rural mountain areas and hiring predominantly young girls and women. With labor regulations not enforced, workers are paid a pittance, if they are paid at all, and work extremely long hours.

In conjunction with NGOs and women's committees within the labor unions, Solidarity Center is working to raise workers' awareness about the above issues. Specifically, programs focus on human rights, civic education, labor counseling, and rights in the workplace. Solidarity Center is looking to take the civic education project, which trains teachers in developing civic education curriculum, to scale and have it formally introduced in the national school curricula. Overall, labor unions appear to provide a



forum for both genders to voice their grievances and a potentially fertile environment to become empowered.

In addition to ACILS activities, the PLEDGE project (SO 2.3) has been active in local economic development in rural areas. Noting that the gender disparities often found in rural areas because of more traditional social norms, PLEDGE, with the support from the Mission, is considering the adoption of three new focus areas in the new two-year plan: women in economic development, cross-border collaborations, and Romany communities. This targeted approach may not be in line with the mainstreaming approach, but in this instance it may be justified. Statistics show that poverty levels in rural areas, specifically among female single-headed households and minority groups, are increasing. Unemployment tends to be higher in rural areas, especially in communities with a high percentage of minorities.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Employment:

- Make a concerted effort to include the relevant labor union committees in any activities (workshops, training, and roundtables) relating to labor law legislation—on special measures for gender equity such as quota systems and the Equal Opportunity Act for Women and Men.
- Support local economic development projects, via PLEDGE, in rural communities that are targets for sweat shop activities. Aim at creating long-term employment opportunities for women in these regions.
- Support union activities that promote awareness raising and advocacy within the union on women specific labor rights (that is, equal pay for equal jobs and security to return to jobs after childbirth).

### *Education Reform*

Education reform focuses on testing new curricula and learning environments appropriate for democratic systems and market economies, helping countries maintain universal education and educational attainment levels, and developing and testing training programs for social-sector specialization.<sup>77</sup>

From a gender perspective, the Bulgarian educational system displays little evidence of a gender gap. Enrollment data reflect a high degree of parity between boys and girls. Across the board, literacy, enrollment, and learning achievement rankings are some of the highest in the world. It does appear that women outnumber men in tertiary enrollment rates, whereas men's enrollment rates in vocational schools surpass those of women's. This becomes an issue in the type of education boys and girls receive and in whether that education adequately prepares them to meet the enormous challenges that resulted from

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<sup>77</sup> USAID, *From Transition to Partnership, A Strategic Partnership for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia*, 1999.

the economic, political, and social transition. Jobs in the restructured economy require new skill-sets, and democracy requires participatory modes of thinking. The educational system must be able to provide individuals with the prerequisite knowledge and training for the transition to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Although there is a necessity to adapt school curricula at all levels to meet society's transforming needs, there also must be efforts to train and retrain the existing labor market. Traditional and vocational schooling must be aligned with labor market demand. To be successful takes a targeted approach, one that includes all members of society, including both genders and individuals from all ethnic groups. According to recent statistics, the level of education is an important pre-condition of female employment. The National Statistical Institute reports that the lowest levels of employment are recorded among women who either have completed or have education below the 8th grade.<sup>78</sup>

In minority populations, where unemployment has reached 70 percent in some instances and early dropout rates are high, especially for girls, vocational training targeted to meeting demand for skilled and semi-skilled labor may pose a useful alternative to traditional schooling. From a human capacity development perspective, training individuals, especially girls, in skills that have direct employment links and are relevant to their needs could lead to delayed marriage ages and reduced fertility rates—problems that are endemic to Bulgarian minority populations, especially the Romany, and that contribute to the high level of poverty and poor health of these communities.

The second issue pertinent to educational reform refers to the institutional capacity of the educational system, which is rapidly deteriorating. Public expenditure on education in 1997 was only one quarter of former Soviet funding levels, although for the past three years it has slowly risen.<sup>79</sup> Any further cutbacks in public spending, specifically in areas such as education, differentially impact the employment of women because women constitute the vast majority of teachers in Bulgaria. Although employment rates of teachers appear to have remained steady, a restructuring of the educational sector could lead to rising number of female unemployed.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Education Reform:

- Promote the integration of gender in curriculum development and teacher training activities at all levels: primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational.
- Target minority populations in future education activities, ensuring equal gender participation.

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<sup>78</sup> UNDP, *Common Country Assessment, Bulgaria*, 2000.

<sup>79</sup> UNICEF MONEE PROJECT, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 1999.

- Investigate increasing technical and financial assistance to promote a civic education project. Ensure the civic education curricula are inclusive of gender and ethnicity.
- Promote gender equity in leadership in education and school management.

### *Social Insurance Reform*

USAID/Bulgaria is funding the Pension Reform Project to provide expertise to draft legislation, assist with the introduction of the new pension system, and implement a public awareness campaign. Since by 1998 pensioners accounted for 29 percent of the population and 80 percent of those with social security insurance in Bulgaria, the activity impacts many men and women in Bulgaria.<sup>80</sup>

Until 1999, the previous “pay as you go” system covered all employees and was financed by payroll contributions and national budget transfers. The retirement age was 60 for men and 55 for women. Until 1996, when a man or woman reached his or her retirement age, the pension was calculated based on the individual’s average wage, length of employment, and an average wage in the economy. Under the old system, women received preferential treatment in benefits, eligibility, or both in five of nine social benefit programs in Bulgaria.<sup>81</sup>

As the extensive system of social protection slowly collapsed because of a depressed economy, the decreasing number of people paying into the system, and falling tax revenues, the Government of Bulgaria moved toward a three-pillar system of insurance:

- I. Pay-As-You-Go System (Social Security)—administered by the National Social Security Institute. Employers are obligated to contribute a specified percentage of the worker’s wage into this fund. Benefits are paid when retirement age is reached. The amount of the benefit is based on number of years of social payment contributions were made either by the employer or by the person.
- II. Mandatory Pension Savings (Occupational and Universal Funds)—administered by private funds. Contributions under occupational funds are paid by the employer and are 12 percent or 7 percent of the wage, depending on the labor category. The persons eligible for these funds are limited to persons working in specific conditions that require earlier retirement.<sup>82</sup>
- III. Voluntary Savings—administered by private funds.

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<sup>80</sup> UNDP, *Common Country Assessment, Bulgaria*, 2000.

<sup>81</sup> UNICEF MONEE PROJECT, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 1999.

<sup>82</sup> “Pension Savings in Bulgaria”, Gabriela Stoyanova, *Investment Opportunities for Social Insurance Funds: Research Papers and Discussion*, Sofia, July-June 2000.

Under the new systems, the retirement age was raised to 63 for men and 60 for women. What are the gender issues for men and women with the implementation of the new system? The following is a summary of discussions held with project implementers:

1. **Lack of Social Payments:** Because the calculation of a person's pension is based on years for which the person or employer makes social payments, thousands of people working without a formal contract or in the shadow economy may not be provided social payments or understand how this will affect their pensions. This negative factor will have a strong impact on women because they are more likely to accept jobs without contracts and enter the informal market.
2. **Maternity Leave:** Under the new system, women in Bulgaria have the right to paid maternity leave of 45 days before birth and 135 days after birth for both public and private sectors employees. During this period, employers are required to pay 90 percent of insurance income but not more than the average net salary they received over a certain period. Fathers are not allowed this specific benefit (45 days before birth and 135 days after birth) even if the father is the primary care provider. This benefit seems to disadvantage women's employment because some employers use this as an excuse to not hire women. It was stated that employers will discriminate against hiring a woman because employers will be required to pay both her maternity benefits and the wages for the worker who replaces her during her maternity leave.
3. **Years of Unemployment:** Men and women who are long-term unemployed will not receive credit toward their pension. The State Unemployment Fund insures unemployed people for 9-12 months, depending on their work history. Women's unemployment is greater than men's and more women are entering the ranks of Bulgaria's long-term unemployed.<sup>83</sup>

To lessen the potential negative impact of social insurance reform, men and women need to understand the new system and how the terms and length of their employment will affect their pensions. The Pension Reform Project implemented a public awareness campaign, including a radio show, television advertisements, and a hotline. Of the 16,256 calls received on the hotline, 59 percent were from women. Additionally, more specific laws are being developed for the first pillar of assistance. It is important as USAID-funded consultants assist with the reviewing and drafting of any new laws that gender analysis be part of the process.

#### Recommendations for Gender Integration in Social Insurance Reform:

- Continue the public awareness campaign with a target of reaching populations most negatively impacted by the new pension program.
- Create a discussion, when appropriate, within roundtables and meetings about pension reform and gender issues.

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<sup>83</sup> For more detailed statistics, please see opening section on Economic Transition.

- Distribute World Bank papers on pension reform and gender issues (available on Mission's public drive) to implementing partners and government officials.
- Request that all scopes of work for contractors working on drafting or reviewing legislation on the social insurance system include gender analysis.

### *Vulnerable Groups*

Ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, specifically the Roma population, are both socially and economically marginalized and are often excluded from access to public services such as electricity, education and health services, and employment opportunities in the formal job sector. Although the minority populations in Bulgaria, including ethnic Turks, Pomaks, and Roma, have historically lived isolated from ethnic Bulgarian communities, the economic and social insecurity magnified by the transition has further secluded these communities. There is also a significant degree of prejudice toward Roma and other ethnic minorities.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, this has led to segregated ethnically homogenous neighborhoods and villages, characterized by acute poverty, high levels of unemployment, lower levels of educational attainment (compared with ethnic Bulgarians) and overall poor physical health. Official statistics indicate that:

- As much as 25 percent of the poor in Bulgaria belong to ethnic minorities and of those two-thirds come from Roma population.
- Roma households, with between 5 to 10 persons, survive each day with the equivalent of US\$2-3 per day.
- Total unemployment in Roma communities is 71 percent, and few, if any, of the unemployed are eligible to receive unemployment benefits because they have not paid sufficient contributions.<sup>85</sup>

Although parallel health statistics were not found, studies report that of all the population groups, Roma (as much as 40 percent) indicate they do not visit hospitals, one-third say they do not visit polyclinics, and as many as 55 percent say they do not visit dentists. Fifty percent of Roma do not visit a doctor and prefer to treat their illnesses themselves. Health services remain limited because of the remoteness from facilities, associated costs, and lack of participation in the regular structures of service provision.<sup>86</sup>

Although both women and men in ethnic populations can be characterized as vulnerable, women overwhelmingly appear to fit into this category. Statistical and anecdotal evidence suggest that Romani women have even less education than Romani men; marry and give birth at very early ages; and suffer more pregnancy complications, premature births, and low-weight babies than non-Romani women. Forty percent get married before

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<sup>84</sup> European Roma Rights Center, *Profession: Prisoner Roma in Detention in Bulgaria*, December 1997.

<sup>85</sup> UNDP, *2000 Common Country Assessment*, Sofia, 2000.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

16 years old and 80 percent before 18 years old. Generally, when they marry, the girls will discontinue their education.<sup>87</sup> Results from a 1998 World Bank study conducted in eight settlements in the country illustrated that women were much less likely to attend school—29 percent had never attended school or had dropped out before finishing grade 4. These statistics compare with 11 percent for men. Women were also less likely to have continued on to upper school.<sup>88</sup> This is in contrast men and women in the general population, where females are 50 percent of the population at all levels—primary through tertiary.

The possible effects of this phenomenon are grave. Therefore, the Mission should pay special attention to targeting not only minority populations in future employment, health, and education activities but also the female minority population. In addition, the Mission should remain cognizant of the traditional norms and values of minority communities, especially when dealing with domestic matters such as family violence, family planning, marriage rights, girls education, and even economic empowerment. They can differ immensely from those of ethnic Bulgarian communities and may require alternative approaches.

Recommendations for Gender Integration into Assistance to Vulnerable Populations:

- Conduct a gender analysis of the target population in the planning and design stage of an activity to ensure that potential differences—and ways to address them—are taken into account. Analysis should include a specific section on education of girls of minority populations.
- Investigate the possibility of starting a public health awareness campaign (via media; basic health care courses—specifically, reproductive health; and local health care centers) for ethnic minority populations, primarily Roma groups. This would increase both health awareness and access to affordable health care facilities.

### **Questions for Social Sector Assessment**

Men and women should be interviewed separately to get their opinions and answers to the following questions:

- Have women and men been affected differently in their access to/support from social programs? If so, how? How does this affect the family structure?
- Do school curricula reflect gender equity? What about teachers' attitudes toward boys and girls in the classroom; do they differ?

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> World Bank, *Roma and the Transition in Eastern and Central Europe, Trends and Challenges*, 1998.

- What are men and women's understanding of their rights regarding discrimination and harassment? Is there a need to for legal literacy activities?
- Do women and men participate in labor union activities in different ways and at different levels? Are labor union activities affecting women and men differently?
- Do women and men understand the changes social insurance system? How do they think these changes will effect them?
- Do women and men understand the issues surrounding taking early retirement, working in the shadow economy or without a contract, and not making social payment contributions?
- How do men and women use health facilities differently?
- What are the opinions of men and women on the current health system? What are the health care needs of men and women? Are these being met? What are the recommendations from men and women on changes needed in the system?
- How do minority populations (Roma) use the current health system? What can be done to bring them fully into the system? Are there differences between men and women of these populations?
- What can be done to bring girls and women of minority populations into the education system?

### **CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATION**

1. ***Provide training in gender mainstreaming for Mission staff and implementing partners.*** The Mission staff and implementing partners are interested in how to effectively mainstream gender in the existing portfolio, with the ultimate goal of designing and implementing better activities.

Mission staff and implementing partners need assistance to recognize gender-based differences and to learn ways in which programs can be improved through the incorporation of gender concerns. In many meetings, there was a misconception that gender was about women-specific programs only and that gender is not something that can be "added on." A gender-awareness training session should be held for all Mission staff and implementing partners that would include specific tools and techniques on how to view activities through a gender lens and plan accordingly. It may be appropriate to invite counterparts to specific sessions.

New and revised agency guidelines on integrating gender should be a key part of this training. These would include, for example, USAID’s ADS guidelines and E&E Bureau’s guidelines for Washington and Missions on activity approval.

2. ***Disaggregate all people-level indicators by sex, when appropriate.*** Many implementing partners already disaggregate data, and others can easily do so. USAID staff and implementing partners should look at indicators to help assess activities and develop strategies for future activities. It is not the numbers that are important but what those numbers mean; they should be used to build opportunities and remove constraints.
3. ***Inform implementing partners of USAID’s gender policies.*** USAID’s Gender Plan of Action and E&E Bureau’s *Mainstreaming Gender: More Effective and Better-targeted Development* should be provided to all implementing partners.
4. ***Require that implementing partners report on gender considerations to SO teams.*** Information supplied by implementers in quarterly and annual reports should include, where possible, sex-disaggregated data supplemented by qualitative narrative (that is, success stories and best practices in gender mainstreaming).
5. ***Include gender analysis in all new country strategies, activity designs, and assessments and evaluations.*** As called for in Agency and Bureau guidelines, special attention should be paid to gender analysis in the development of the new country strategy and in the design of all new activities, including related assessments. Gender analysis and related data will result in more efficient and effective work.
6. ***Identify Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue in Country Strategy.*** As required under ADS 201.3.4.11 - Technical Analysis for Strategic Plans, “Strategic Plans must reflect attention to gender concerns.” USAID/Bulgaria should identify gender as a cross-cutting issue in the new country strategy. Additionally, all analysis completed for the development of the country strategy should incorporate gender. Impact of gender should be addressed in each sectoral area within the strategy.
7. ***Formalize the Gender Committee***
  - **Create a charter.** To formalize the responsibilities of the Mission Gender Committee, we recommend the drafting of a Mission Gender Committee Charter (see Template—Annex D).
  - **Hold quarterly meetings.** Committee meetings should be held on a quarterly basis. Meetings will be used to increase the knowledge of members and entities they represent and to collect and disseminate information on gender issues in specific sectors.
  - **Invite implementers to attend meetings once or twice a year.** The Mission Gender Committee should organize a biannual gender roundtable, which would



bring together international donors, U.S. government entities and *implementing partners from all SOs* involved in gender activities. Fostering communication, the roundtable may bring greater cohesion to the country's gender activities, possibly leading to cooperation among the different SAAs and donors.

8. ***Complete the Gender Mission Order on gender mainstreaming.*** This document will serve as a concrete guide to the Mission's gender-related activities and policies.
9. ***Investigate recruiting an International Women in Development Fellow.*** If the responsibilities of integrating gender become burdensome for the current gender advisors, consider other ways in which responsibilities could be shared, including the recruitment of a G/WID International Women in Development Fellow.
10. ***Update and promote use of information technology.*** Activity managers want easy access to gender-related information, including ADS regulations, examples of gender analysis wording, and sector-specific papers on gender issues. A Gender folder within the Mission's public drive has been developed and includes documents and other important information, including the Agency papers on gender issues.

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**ANNEX A**  
**STATEMENT OF WORK**



## **STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **BACKGROUND**

Since the inception of the USAID Mission to Bulgaria program, the Mission has recognized the challenges to the equal advancement of both men and women. In the past, USAID/Bulgaria chose to address gender issues through its emphasis on economic reform, accelerated development and growth of private enterprises, and civil society development. In an effort to build upon existing programming and current activities in the country, the Mission intends to institute more targeted strategy development to reflect the key role of gender considerations in the achievement of its goals and strategic objectives. Currently the Mission is working towards the achievement of five strategic objectives, several special initiatives and crosscutting activities, which encompass all program resources managed by the Mission.

The five objectives are grouped into two of the three strategic assistance areas on which USAID/E&E Missions focus: (1) market transition, (2) democratic transition, and (3) social transition. The five SOs are: (1) SO 1.3. Enterprise Development; (2) SO 1.4. Private Financial Sector; (3) SO 2.1. Citizens' Participation; (4) SO 2.2. Rule of Law; and (5) SO 2.3. Local Government. Attached is a short description of the five strategic objectives.

In FY 2002, the USAID Mission to Bulgaria will submit its new 3-5 year country strategy. In the process of its preparation, due consideration will be given to the participation of and benefits to each gender in development programs in order to secure gender equality in program and organizational structures. To meet this goal, the Mission decided to elicit support for the integration of gender considerations into the country program portfolio.

### **PURPOSE OF WORK**

The purpose of this Scope of Work is to obtain the services of a team of two consultants. The team shall provide an assessment of the existing country program portfolio, outlining the main areas where gender issues are of greatest essence, and shall formulate detailed recommendations on how gender considerations can be integrated more systematically into the Mission's current and future country programs.

## TASKS

The primary tasks of the team are to:

1. Carry out a Gender Assessment and, based on this, design a Gender Action Plan.
  - # Assess the Mission's present strategic framework, results framework, and the program portfolio and assess potential gender issues in a future portfolio and/or strategic framework.
  - # Produce assessment of possible entry-points for incorporation of gender considerations in ongoing activities and potential new programs. The assessment is to be organized and shaped by:
    - # USAID/Bulgaria framework.
    - # E&E approach to mainstreaming gender.
    - # Newly revised Agency Strategic Plan (Gender as Cross-Cutting Theme).
    - # Based on this assessment, design a Gender Action plan which lays out the steps for mainstreaming gender in Mission policies and activities.
    - # Should address both the operationalizing of gender from the perspective of technical offices and divisions as well as of the overall Mission management. based on the analysis under Task 1 above, for a detailed USAID/Bulgaria Gender Action Plan to address fully the requirements of Agency Directives.
    - # It should include but not be limited to the following elements:
      - # The gender assessment described above.
      - # Technical advice on development of Mission's new Strategic and Results Framework to reflect the key role of gender considerations in the achievement of USAID goals.
      - # Outline under each strategic objective of the key role of gender in development.
      - # Recommendations on how to develop gender indicators of program impact and approaches for the collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data.
2. Produce draft points for a Mission Order mainstreaming gender issues.
  - # The points should reflect:
    - # Procurement issues;

- # Reflecting the Agency ADS guidelines, standard provisions addressing gender to be included in RFPs, RFAs, etc.;
  - # Outline of steps for evaluating gender components of proposals;
  - # Gender structure within the Mission to address operational and policy goals;
  - # SO Teams; and
  - # Gender Committee—including outline of Committee’s responsibilities.
3. Carry out gender briefings of USAID/Bulgaria staff and implementors.
- # Facilitate 2-3 briefing sessions for Mission staff and their implementing partners. Each session will be from 45-60 minutes.
  - # Topics covered will include the why of integrating gender and background to the Agency (ADS) guidelines on gender integration.
  - # Participants will be all the activity managers of USAID/Bulgaria, SO team leaders, the program staff and major the implementing partners. Division of the three sessions by technical area will be determined by the Mission Gender Advisor.

## **METHODOLOGY**

1. Prior to departure for Bulgaria, review documents to be forwarded to team members by the Mission, G/WID, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor. These will include Mission policy and planning documents, such as the current Strategic Plan and R4s; background information on gender issues in Bulgaria, such as UNDP and MONEE reports and other in-country data; gender assessments and gender action plans from other countries or regions which can be used as models by the team; and USAID/M/OP procurement guidelines.
2. In carrying out the data collection phase of the work, the team shall interview the following and collect related information:
  - # Members of the Missions’ SO Teams and the Program Office.
  - # A sample of USAID implementors, as identified by the Mission in advance (in order to facilitate appointments) and approved by the Mission.
  - # A small sample of USAID-funded NGOs, as identified by the Mission in advance (in order to facilitate appointments) and approved by the Mission.



- # Major donors or other international organizations which have important gender programs in Bulgaria, as identified by the Mission in advance (in order to facilitate appointments) and approved by the Mission.
- 3. All work shall use the gender approach of the newly revised USAID Strategic Plan and the USAID/E&E Strategic Framework and Mainstreaming Gender fact sheet.

## **DELIVERABLES**

### 1. Gender Assessment & Action Plan:

The Gender Assessment and Action Plan will use the data from interviews and secondary sources to assess the appropriate technical areas for gender emphasis and make recommendations for future actions for gender integration, described above as the first task. The document will also be the basis for further technical assistance, provided by USAID/Washington.

- # A preliminary draft shall be submitted to the Mission upon completion of fieldwork, with an electronic copies forwarded to the Mission, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor. The three recipients will provide written comments to the Team Leader electronically within 5 working days of receipt.
- # A revised draft Gender Assessment & Action Plan, incorporating Mission, WIDTech, and the Bureau shall be submitted to the Mission, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor not later than 5 working days after receiving the above comments. The Mission, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor shall provide any additional written comments electronically within 5 working days of receipt of the revised draft.
- # The Final Gender Assessment & Action Plan will be submitted within 10 working days after receiving comments on the revised draft.

### 2. Mission Order:

Draft points for a Mission Order which mainstreams gender issues shall be submitted to the Mission, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor for consideration and comments not later than two weeks after the completion of the field work.

### 3. Gender Briefings:

Facilitate 2 to 3 sessions or meetings for Mission staff and implementing partners. Each session will be from 45-60 minutes. Topics covered will include why integrating gender results in more effective results and Agency (ADS) procurement guidelines.

### **ESTIMATED LEVEL OF EFFORT**

It is anticipated that the services of a team of two consultants will be required for up to 22 days each. The Team Leader shall be the more senior of the two. Each consultant will have up to three days for preparation beforehand, two days for travel, twelve days in country, and five days at home to complete the draft and final documents. A six-day workweek will be authorized overseas to be used if necessary. Total LOE will be up to 44 days, including travel.

### **PERFORMANCE PERIOD**

It is anticipated that this work will begin on/about March 19, 2001. The work will be completed by May 31, 2001.

### **TRAVEL AND PER DIEM**

- # Air Travel to and from Sophia and the homes of the consultants.
- # Two weeks per diem in-country for each consultant, for a total of four weeks per diem in country (six-day week).

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The consultants will work closely with the USAID/Bulgaria Gender Advisor who will provide oversight while in country. Entry and exit meetings of the consultants with the Mission Director or her representative will be organized. WIDTech will provide overall direction as necessary. All TA deliverables will be provided for comment to the Mission, WIDTech, and the E&E Gender Advisor.

**ANNEX B**  
**PERSONS CONTACTED**



## PERSONS CONTACTED

### **USAID/Sofia**

Debra McFarland, Mission Director

### ***Program Office***

Ivanka Tzankova, Program Officer  
 Assia Alexieva, Development Program Assistant  
 Katia Alexieva, Deputy Program Officer  
 James Lee, Environmental Specialist  
 John Morgan, Program Officer/Special Initiatives  
 Nora Ovcharova, AE& PS Manager Coordinator  
 Emilia Stoyanova, Human Capacity Development Specialist

### ***Democracy Office***

Nadereh Lee, Democracy Officer  
 Diana Arnaudova, NGO and Media Specialist  
 Dessislava Bijeva, Judicial Reform Specialist  
 Kiril Kiriakov, Local Government Specialist  
 Thomas Potocki, Local Government Specialist  
 Radina Stoyanova, Parliamentary Assistant

### ***Economic Growth Office***

Bill Foerderer, Economic Growth Officer  
 Doncho Barbalov, Capital Markets and Pension Reform Specialist  
 Rayna Dimitrova, Banking Specialist  
 Ted LaFarge, Private Enterprise Specialist  
 Nikolai Yarmov, SME Specialist

### **USAID/E&E/DC**

Valerie Estes, Gender Advisor

### **U.S. Department of Justice/Bulgaria**

Karen Kramer

### **Implementing Partners**

ABA/CEELI  
 Victoria Airgood, Liaison  
 Antoanela Pavlova, Legal Advisor

ACDI/VOCA  
 Firm Level Assistance Group (FLAG)  
 Krassimir Kiriakov, Country Representative

CARANA Corporation  
 Pension Reform Project  
 Rosa Chiappe, Chief of Party  
 Pedro Souss, Information Technology

Center for the Study of Democracy  
 Denislava Simeonova

Coalition 2000  
 Zhivka Damyanova, Coordinator

East-West Management Institute  
 Laurence Vetter, Chief of Party

FMI, Inc.  
 Capital Markets Regulations Project  
 Ann Wallace, Chief of Party

Foundation for Local Government Reform  
 Veselina Kolcheva, Chief Program Officer

Institute for Sustainable Communities  
 Jane Williams-Grube, Country Director

International Executive Service Corps  
Firm Level Assistance Group (FLAG)  
Ventsislav Vassilev, Country Director

KPMG Consulting/Barents Group  
Richard Lewis, Country Director  
Health Reform Project  
Susan Matthies, Chief of Party

Magistrates Training Center  
Dragomir Iordinov, Director

MBA Enterprise Corps  
Firm Level Assistance Group  
Nickolai Gerasimov, Country Director

Management Systems International  
Competitiveness Initiative  
Joe Lowther, Director

Nachala Foundation  
Microcredit Activity  
Peter Arnaudov, CEO

Pro Media  
Petko Georgiev, Resident Adviser

Solidarity Center  
Robert J. Wayss, Country Program  
Director  
Mariela Simova, Program Officer

U.S. Department of Labor  
Partners in Local Economic Development  
and Governmental Effectiveness  
Jane Daly, Program Director

### **Women's NGOs**

Animus Foundation  
Katia Christonova

Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual  
Health Association  
Dr. Radosveta Stamenkova, Executive  
Director

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation  
Genoveva Tisheva, Executive Director

Business Women's Clubs  
Center "Nadja"  
Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation

Lachi Romi "Virtuous Women"  
Romana Stefanova

National Association of Bulgarian Women

Rural Women's Clubs  
Maria Zagorska, President

Women for Dignity Union  
Evguenia Kiranova, President

Women's Alliance for Development

### **Donor Organizations**

Soros Foundation  
Tatyana Kmetova, Women's Network  
Coordinator

United Nations Development Programme  
Anna Atanassova, Programme Officer

World Bank  
Boryana Gotcheva, Social Sector Project  
Officer  
Peter Pojarski, Social Sector Operations  
Officer

**ANNEX C**

**MAINSTREAMING GENDER  
BUREAU FOR EUROPE & EURASIA, USAID**





## MAINSTREAMING GENDER

Bureau for Europe & Eurasia, USAID

### MORE EFFECTIVE & BETTER-TARGETED DEVELOPMENT

Mainstreaming gender is one of E&E's major cross-cutting goals because (1) it give us better targeted and more effective development activities and (2) it responds to new USAID procurement guidelines which call for attention to gender in planning and procurement.

- # **“Gender” is not another word for “women.”** It means examining the problems, opportunities, and solutions for **both men and women**, particularly as they may differ.
- # **Mainstreaming gender means analyzing potential gender differences** by asking such questions as the following and using the answers to shape planning and implementation:
  - How are the problems of men and women different? How might solutions be different?
  - How might contributions of men and women to programs be different?
  - How might activities differentially affect women and men?

As the examples below show, using gender as an additional lens through which to view and resolve technical issues will result in better targeted and more effective activities.

### Social Transition

- # In Central Asia, a USAID study examined health costs by gender and found that men and women use health facilities differently and that the costs are different. Because of both custom and health problems, men go to hospitals and women to clinics, and men's per-capita care is more expensive. Now, a clinic outreach program specifically targets men, which will improve their preventive care and, thus, their health. It will also result in considerable savings in health budgeting.
- # In Kyrgyzstan, recent World Bank research used gender and age in measuring vulnerability. The data show that young men are more economically at risk than women their age and are also particularly susceptible to high-risk behavior such as drinking, drug use, crime—including drug trafficking—and physical violence. The lack of work opportunities has resulted in a cycle of hopelessness leading to anti-social behavior. Not only does this have a detrimental impact on communities, it also has major national security implications. Consequently, the report calls for specific targeting of young men in job-creation and other anti-poverty activities.

## Economic Transition

- # In Georgia, a micro-enterprise program had been available only for women. However, a gender analysis of the target population—internally displaced persons selling in local markets—showed that men were also among the poor. In addition, data demonstrated that male and female clients were equally likely to spend extra income on the family rather than on personal expenditures. Consequently, the program was re-structured to include 24 percent men, the proportion of men within the target population. After one year, over 70 percent of both male and female clients reported an increase in weekly income.
  
- # In Ukraine, creating more women entrepreneurs was an important way to combat the problem of high unemployment rates for women, particularly since women were obvious clients (30 percent of all new business owners) and because female entrepreneurs create more jobs for women than do male. But, absent specific attention to women, business programs tended to focus principally on men. Consequently, in 1999, USAID asked business-development implementors to analyze the best methods for reaching women, as well as men. The revised targeting resulted in many more women entering the market economy. For example, in one business center, women clients increased 23 percent between 1999 and 2000.

March 2001

**ANNEX D**  
**GENDER COMMITTEE CHARTER**



## **GENDER COMMITTEE CHARTER**

### **PURPOSE**

The Mission Gender Committee has been formed by USAID/Bulgaria to enhance the effectiveness of the Mission's development assistance by taking into account women's roles and contributions. The Mission Gender Committee serves as a cross-cutting team with representation from all USAID/CAR programmatic and technical offices.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The team's objectives are the following:

- # Ensure the integration of gender issues into USAID/Bulgaria programming and policies;
- # To function as a think group in order to raise issues and propose programming that addresses targeted gender issues;
- # To serve as a coordinating body for gender issues among technical teams in the mission; and
- # To devise cutting-edge documents, sub-strategies, and concept papers addressing gender issues for the Mission's consideration.

### **TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Core Team Members**

The Core Team consists of the following members:

(list members here)

#### **Extended Team Members**

A broad and representative spectrum of participation by our implementing partners, other donors, and the public and private sectors sharing our objectives and committed to achieving them will comprise the expanded team. The extended team will include representatives of organizations who are collaborating with the Mission in implementing its development strategy. In addition, the Mission Gender Committee will also include new members chosen

for their abilities, interest, and commitment. Extended team members are consulted on a needs-only basis concerning all aspects of development and implementation of our strategy and programs.

### *Suggested Members*

E&E Bureau Gender Advisor  
ABA/CEELI  
ISC  
Open Society Foundation  
UNDP  
World Bank  
(Fill in additional organizations)

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### **Expectations of the Team Leader**

- # Provide leadership, vision and direction in promoting gender concerns;
- # Keep committee members informed regarding decisions that affect the team;
- # Keep committee members on track and focused on purpose, tasks and results;
- # Defend and represent team's perspective and concerns to Front Office and other technical offices;
- # Represent committee interests to other Missions and outside audience (e.g. Embassy, USAID/W, Bulgarian partners, etc); and
- # Accept the need to adjust tasks, schedules and priorities when confronted with situations requiring urgent action.

### *Tasks for Team Leader*

- # Organize and facilitate quarterly meetings;
- # Act as the Mission Liaison to USAID/G/WID and USAID/E&E Bureau;
- # Disseminate information on gender including USAID regulations to committee members; and

- # Act as resource for any questions that Committee members may have on mainstreaming gender.

### **Committee Members Expectations of themselves as Committee Member**

- # Provide quality work in a timely manner;
- # Share responsibility for creating a good working atmosphere by promoting and maintaining team spirit;
- # Be consulted in individual areas of expertise;
- # Share and conduct with other committee members information relevant to team activities;
- # Contribute specific technical expertise;
- # Communicate regularly with committee members;
- # Fully support, adhere to team decisions when consensus has been reached;
- # Contribute to synergy among Mission teams; and
- # Be available to committee partners.

### *Tasks for Committee Members*

- # Attend quarterly committee meeting and report on proceedings at Office staff meetings;
- # Disseminate information on gender including USAID regulations to committee members; and
- # Act as a resource for any questions that Office members may have on gender mainstreaming

### **Committee Members Expectations of Themselves vis-à-vis Front Office**

- # Follow rules in submitting for clearance decisions which need to be approved by Front Office;
- # Report and communicate regularly concerning committee activities, priorities and concerns;

- # Provide data, information and analysis needed for results reporting related to gender issues;
- # Adhere to decisions at the Mission level concerning USAID/Bulgaria's strategies; and
- # Contribute to achieving Mission goals and objectives by advocating for the further integration of gender empowerment into our programs.

### **Committee Expectations of Front Office**

- # Increase and support the visibility of gender issues within the Mission;
- # Ensure that senior management team also seriously takes into consideration gender issues into our development assistance;
- # Respect committee's opinions and advice and give feedback; and
- # Articulate Gender Issues, Committee's issues, plan, and priorities to AID/Washington, Embassies, and Bulgarian partners.

### **Tasks for Committee**

- # **Hold Quarterly Meetings.** Committee meetings for core members should be held on a quarterly basis.
- # **Invite extended members to attend meetings once or twice a year.** The Mission Gender Committee should organize a biannual gender roundtable, which would bring together international donors, USG entities and implementing partners from all SOs.
- # **Draft "Status of Mainstreaming Gender" paper annually for the R4.** Core committee members will work annually on a paper that will outline the important steps that were taken to mainstream gender in the Mission's portfolio and procedures. The paper will outline the steps that will be taken in the next year to mainstream gender.
- # **Disseminate USAID policies on Gender.** Provide implementing partners with the 1996 Gender Plan of Action and USAID/E&E Bureau's Mainstreaming Gender paper to all Implementing Partners. If website is developed, provide papers online.



## **OPERATING PROCEDURES**

### **Decision-making Processes**

The committee agrees that there are various types of decisions it will face: political, group and individual. Political decisions are made at higher administrative levels and are usually non-negotiable. The committee agrees that, in cases where it disagrees strenuously with the decision, it will present to the appropriate individual(s) a technical counter-argument to that decision, and will record that counter-argument in its minutes, but will ultimately accept the final decision made by this individual(s). The committee agrees that for group decisions falling within its purview, consensus will be the preferred means for making these decisions. Committee members agree to respect and implement all decisions, whatever their type, once they have been made.

### **Internal and External Communication**

All committee members agree to share information broadly and appropriately and report to appropriate colleagues by e-mail the substance of meetings and seminars of priority interest to them. Minutes of meetings will be recorded by a rotating recorder, distributed on a timely basis after each meeting, and kept in a special file on the USAID/Bulgaria public directory "gender." Committee members will communicate regularly with the Front Office, other technical offices, donors, and Bulgarian partners to share information to seek and to provide feedback concerning activities.

### **Relationship with Management, Other SOs & Partners**

Committee members will strive to promote synergy with other technical offices, donors, and Bulgarian partners to achieve results. Committee members will work closely with the Front Office to insure that the Front Office is aware of team needs, concerns and that the team is aware of factors affecting Front Office policy and constraints.

### **Empowerment and Accountability**

Committee members agree that they will respect delegations of authority made and will commit themselves and their colleagues to take on the authorities delegated to them. Committee members agree that they will take the initiative to complete tasks that will further take into consideration gender concerns without waiting to be asked, as long as these actions are within their legal authority. Committee members agree that they will support the empowerment of their colleagues, when it is clear that the corresponding accountability has

been understood and accepted. Committee members will take advantage of all opportunities to develop and update their skills to ensure achievement of results.

### **UPDATING OF CHARTER**

All committee members will abide by the concepts described in this charter which will be reviewed and updated as appropriate. Afterward the charter will be reviewed at least once a year.

### **SIGNATORIES**

Mission Director  
Office Directors  
Mission Gender Committee Members