



THE FERGHANA VALLEY: CURRENT CHALLENGES

2005

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2005

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- Reducing female poverty;
- Ending violence against women;
- Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls;
- Achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of both peace and war.

The report presents the results of monitoring conflict risk factors and their influence on the situation of women and men in the Ferghana Valley. The monitoring was conducted under the global initiative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) by the Gender dimensions of early warning and conflict prevention in the Ferghana Valley project. Statements of fact and opinion appearing in this publication are made by the authors alone and do not imply the endorsement of UNIFEM.

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Abbreviations

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
KAFC	Kyrgyz Agricultural Financial Corporation
MDG	Mellennium Development Goals
NAP	National Action Plan on achieving gender equality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NSC	National Statistic Committee
NSC KR	National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
RM	Rural municipality
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
FINCA	Closed joint stock company, FINCA Micro-finance Company

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sums up the results of the Gender dimensions of early warning and conflict prevention in the Ferghana Valley pilot project, in the course of which, from March till December 2005, surveys to study social tension and the possibility of conflicts were conducted in the southern Kyrgyzstan and northern Tajikistan zones of the Ferghana Valley¹. The situation in the region was examined from the gender point of view.

Taking into account the importance of the gender component in the Ferghana Valley and the lack of gender – separated information, the regional UNIFEM office in the CIS implemented the pilot project under the United Nations Development Fund for Women's Peace and conflict monitoring using gender sensitive indicators for early conflict warning global initiative, which was launched in response to Resolution 1325 of the Security Council of the United Nations dated 2000 on the issues of women, peace and security with the aim of involving women and encouraging their participation in peaceful initiatives and conflict prevention.

Information collected by a network of monitors (16 in Kyrgyzstan and 13 in Tajikistan) using gender-sensitive indicators developed in the course of the project, was used in preparing this report. In the course of monitoring both qualitative and quantitative methods of research, including focus group discussions, questionnaires, detailed individual interviews and case studies and material of an electronic forum on youth problems, were used.

Among the most important reasons for possible conflicts in the Ferghana Valley are lack of water and land set against a background of multi-ethnicity and high population density, a large percentage of young people in the population, high levels of unemployment and labour migration, unresolved border demarcation and delimitation issues, the existence of enclaves and disputed areas, strategic drug-trafficking routes coming through the region and the influence of radical religious and extremist groups. The region also has a history of ethnic and religious conflicts, the most violent of which were in Uzbekistan in 1989 with pogroms that involved the evacuation of thousands of Meshketinski Turks from Uzbekistan and the Osh-Uzgen conflict over land in Kyrgyzstan in 1990. The events of spring 2005 in Kyrgyzstan

¹ Uzbekistan was not covered by the project due to the complicated political situation in the country, which was further aggravated by the Andijan events in May 2005.

and Uzbekistan² demonstrated that internal political instability and social dissatisfaction in the countries of the Ferghana Valley directly influence destabilization in the entire region and have high conflict potential.

According to the results of the survey, areas of special concern are gender inequality in access to economic resources set against a background of a general shortage of water, arable land, medical and other services, large percentages of young people, limits to obtaining good quality education and lack of funds due to high unemployment. The situation and status of women have been aggravated due to increasing poverty and the continued dominance of men owning and controlling major economic resources and the strengthening and revival of numerous patriarchal traditions and low levels of women's representation in central and local authorities.

The situation analysis and monitoring data revealed the existence of direct conflict – causing reasons, for instance: numerous violations of human rights and freedoms by internal state units and the necessity for the local population of the region to cross the borders to trade and visit relatives on an almost daily basis. Security in the region is getting worse due to the growth of drug trafficking through the region and the activity of radical and extremist organizations. Monitoring reports are full of descriptions of specific cases of murders and assaults on the civil population by law enforcement bodies and frontier troops at the borders. Structural and direct reasons can combine with single cases to become detonators of tension and lead to conflicts.

With regard to the main problems considered in the report, one of the main conditions for preserving stability in the Ferghana Valley is effective state governance and cooperation between all state structures needed to achieve the long-term interests of the people of the countries in this region. Thus, the main recommendation of the report to the national governments involved is the acknowledgement of their key responsibility for changing the conditions causing conflicts, both in their own countries and throughout the entire region. In order to address the many structural factors, the governments should, together with the neighbouring states, develop comprehensive development strategies, aimed at resolving the fundamental social and economic problems of the region.

² In March 2005 as a result of a political coup and mass protests, there was a change of power in Kyrgyzstan. Two months later – in May – in the course of a demonstration in Andijan, the authorities used military force, resulting in, according to official data, 176 people being killed but alternative sources put the number of victims at 750.

Basic conclusions

The following results and conclusions³ were arrived at in the course of this survey

Gender inequality in access to resources

- In the region there is still a strong tradition of men owning and controlling major economic resources. According to the monitoring results women are very rarely owners, as in more than 80% of cases land and other property is registered in the name of a husband, father, brother or son.
- Unequal ownership of land restricts women's opportunities to escape poverty, in particular in obtaining and using various credits. Due to the collateral required to get medium and large loans, women, as a rule, can usually only raise small loans, making it impossible to develop sustainable forms of business and satisfying only daily family needs. Whilst demonstrating a great capacity to adapt to new economic and social conditions women, nevertheless find themselves restricted to subsistence economics – street markets and small and shuttle businesses and also have to bear the costs of expanding manufacturing from household budgets.
- In seeking to protect their rights women apply to informal authorities more frequently than men – to the Courts of Elders (of a village), women and makhalla (community, neighbourhood) councils, due mainly to the fact that official courts are expensive and that often applying to state structures involves bribing officials.
- The ties of family life, together with the limited possibilities for protecting their rights through formal institutions, lead to common law norms having a greater impact – 'Adat'⁴ the traditional code of behaviour favouring "male" interests in addressing numerous issues of interaction in the community, including property ones. Thus, women find themselves facing double barriers, exacerbating their inequality in accessing resources and protecting their rights to own and manage land and other assets.

Young people, religious and ethnic risk factors

- The Ferghana Valley is not only overpopulated, but also has a large percentage of young people, that make up between 40 and 50% of the total population of the region. With regard to the acuteness and seriousness of the problems faced by young people, there is reason to believe that the youth factor is a serious threat to stability in the region.

³ See in more detail at the end of each section.

⁴ Adat – a traditional set of rules of behaviour.

- Poverty and destruction of the social and cultural infrastructure have lead to greater gender inequality in access to education, medical and social services. Higher education has to be paid for and is thus unobtainable for many poor families. There are no special youth investment programmes in Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan.
- Respondents list youth unemployment in both countries as the most acute problem. Poverty and restricted access to education has lead to young people being marginalized and they have become one of the most vulnerable and socially unprotected groups in society. All this drives young people to migrate to other countries to find work.
- Judging by the survey, the issue of inter-ethnic relations and discrimination based on ethnicity is still acute mainly due to the actions of the border and Customs services of neighbouring states and men are subject to ethnic discrimination more frequently than women.
- The religious factor is becoming more important and information shows quite a high level of intolerance of people who have converted to other religions in both countries. The majority of respondents both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan believe that relationships between supporters of the region's traditional religions and those who have converted to other religions could become grounds for conflicts in the future.
- There are signs of increasing interest in religion among both girls and boys. Informal Islamic study groups have become popular among young girls and boys, who are more frequently looking to study in madrassahs and attend mosques. This is how, on the one hand, young people are trying to replace the traditional institutions of socialization through communicating in informal religious groups and, on the other hand, are trying to supplement the inadequate levels of knowledge received in schools, higher educational establishments and within the family.
- Monitoring identified a high level of dissatisfaction with the state youth policy and low expectations that the policy would improve in the near future. There is more scepticism and distrust in the youth policy of the state among men than women. Especially high is the level of distrust in state bodies addressing youth problems in Kyrgyzstan.
- The decline of young people's trust in state institutions could lead to the younger generation seeking alternative social establishments to a weak and unstable state, which could benefit radical groups preaching denial of the secular state and the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate. According to the survey, one of the main reasons for young men and women joining radical groups is "looking for a fair society".

Problems of gender violence in the region

- Women's concentration on the interests of the family and home, strengthening the role of the family and relatives and neighbourly relationships as an informal mechanism of social protection, promotes women restoring traditional power hierarchies and is one of the reasons for the spread of subjugation and violence in the region. In this case, women's role in conflict situations is mostly unlikely to be considered as purely passive and women can be considered only as victims.
- The current opposing male and female roles in considering conflicts and the statement that male roles promote violence and female – peace and stability, make it considerably more difficult to understand the existing experience of women and men's participation in conflicts.
- In practice women and men's behaviour in conflicts is, to a large extent, determined by their social status and in particular what group they belong to: rich or poor. Monitoring shows that women from poor families more frequently protest openly. Among women participating in protests vulnerable categories dominate: single women, widows and divorced women who are the heads of families and thus can rely only on themselves to protect their interests and the interests of their children.
- The presence of women and women's organizations both in conflicts and conflict resolution does not mean that they have and protect their own particular political interests. In general, practice has shown that women's activity is more likely to be tamed and used in the interests of various authorities and other interested groups of influence.

Basic recommendations

Based on the information received in the course of the survey, the authors propose the following recommendations for future activity in the area of gender sensitive early conflict warning in the Ferghana Valley.

For central governments, local authorities and political leaders of countries of the Ferghana Valley:

- The governments of the countries of the Ferghana Valley must take full responsibility for changing the conditions causing conflicts, both in their own countries and the entire region. To address the many structural factors of conflict the governments should develop comprehensive development strategies aimed at resolving the fundamental social and economic problems in cooperation with neighbouring states.

- Due to the fact that lack of water, land and other economic resources is one of the main factors leading to conflicts, in particular in trans-border areas, it is necessary to focus on developing regional cooperation to find mutually beneficial ways of solving water and energy problems and also the possibility of reaching bi- and tri-lateral decisions.
- With regard to the worsening situation and status of women due to the structural changes, which have taken place during the last decade, it is necessary to formulate a policy aimed at changing the established dominant, subjugating gender relationships by creating conditions for the re-orientation of the mainly male model of governance in the direction of a more egalitarian model, including involving all categories of the population in the decision-making process.
- Given that many conflict factors are connected to the problems faced by young people in the Ferghana Valley, special attention should be given to speedily addressing the issues of youth unemployment, creating conditions for ensuring equal opportunities of access to good quality and in demand education, medical and other services. It is necessary to support all possible ways of channelling young people's energy and expectations in positive directions through involving them in developing local communities, creating conditions for forming formal and informal youth associations and organizing youth-oriented recreational facilities.
- National and local governments must promote the development of adequate gender-sensitive methodologies of monitoring and assessing the situation in the region and also introduce ways of applying the results of public and widespread discussions of the monitoring results in practice.
- Governments of the countries that share the Ferghana Valley must support information exchange, creating networks of doctors, teachers, cultural workers and scientists at individual and institutional levels and support regional mass media and civil society in order to develop cooperation.

For civil society organizations

- Civil society organizations should support universal conflict early warning efforts through developing initiatives for local communities involving women and young people.

- It would be expedient to develop programmes aimed at increasing women's participation in decision-making in order to strengthen stability in the region based on actualising women's interests through promoting the professional interests of teachers, doctors, businesswomen, parents and housewives, thus creating additional channels for expressing the specific interests of women, forming their political voice and strengthening collective solidarity and resources.
- It is also important to expand the opportunities for creating networks of scientists, cultural workers and NGOs, working in the area of strengthening regional cooperation and peaceful initiatives.
- It is necessary to concentrate on providing the excluded groups of women and young people services to develop their capacity and strengthen their impact and lobby their interests whilst observing the principles of involving the targeted groups themselves.
- It is important to conduct countrywide and regional surveys to study the gender impact of development policy and conflict prevention in the region, including the problems of individual and group identity among women and men as representatives of various social groups and categories of the population, types of leadership in the youth environment, capacity and levels of male and female authorities and their impact on local communities and the role and impact of the mass media in the region.

For international organizations

- International organizations are recommended to re-profile the current discursive approaches to the region of the Ferghana Valley, as a destabilized and conflict-prone zone and rethink the need to overcome the differences and gaps between academic, political and practical approaches and to have in place explanations and solutions for conflicts. It is important to pay attention to the problems of state structures inadequately reacting to the needs of the people as one of the key risk factors in various conflicts and violence erupting in the region.
- Donors should work on developing more consistent regional strategies aimed at the long-term goals of human development based on comprehensive gender analysis, and that these are not limited to focusing on conflict prevention or early warning. It is necessary that all key people understand the threats and challenges posed by drug trafficking, crime and terrorism as an inalienable part of the more complex and broader tasks of development and human security in the region.

- International agencies are advised to promote the development and introduction of gender-sensitive indicators into government policy and the practice of international agencies and local NGOs working in the area of early warning and conflict prevention. It is necessary to use approaches, which take into account the specificity of the countries of the Ferghana Valley.
- The international community should expand its understanding of its ambiguous role and the possibilities and risks of women participating in peaceful conflict resolution, bearing in mind the unequal and subordinate status of women in state, family and community hierarchies in the region.
- International agencies should use networks to develop the analytical, inter-disciplinary and experts' capacity in the countries of the region and also work out adequate gender-sensitive methodologies for monitoring and assessing the situation. It is important to consider the possibility of monitoring the situation with the aim of putting conflict early warning in the Ferghana Valley on a more systematic footing.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is a result of the pilot Gender dimensions of early warning and conflict prevention in the Ferghana Valley project, which was implemented under the UNIFEM Global Initiative entitled Monitoring peace and conflicts using gender-sensitive indicators for conflict prevention, which was launched in response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 dated 2000 on the issues of women, peace and security the aim of which was ensuring support to and the continued involvement of women in peaceful initiatives and conflict prevention.

The Ferghana Valley, with its great potential for regional instability, has for a long time prompted international and local organizations to carry out various programmes and projects aimed at lowering risk factors and conflict prevention, including projects to develop local communities' capacity, infrastructure in trans-border areas, education and research.

UNIFEM renders technical assistance to various innovative programmes and strategies to promote women's rights and their political participation in economic security. With UNIFEM support some projects aimed at improving women's access to land and supporting the institutional environment for women's rights have been implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other international agencies support projects in local communities to renovate the social infrastructure, land reform and agricultural restructuring⁵.

Up to now there has been a lack of gender-separated data and gender analysis of the reasons for conflicts and, in particular, their impact on women and men, whereas according to numerous experts' assessments, the situation of women in the region is deteriorating with increasing poverty and unemployment set against a background of social disintegration of the whole valley.

In October 2003, taking into account the importance of the gender element in the situation in the region, UNIFEM organized a mission to the Ferghana Valley to study the activity of other donors and international and local NGOs in the area of conflict early warning. The mission held a series of consultative meetings with potential partners and project participants. The key issue of those consultations was

⁵ Sabates-Wheeler R. Land Rights and Economic Security for Rural Women in Tajikistan. Findings of: A Rural Women's Needs, A legislative Review, and An Institutional Assessment. Dushanbe, 2002.

an analysis of the prospect of preventing conflicts and violence and active exchange of information on the status of women in the region. One of the results was determining ways of collecting gender-sensitive information and developing gender-sensitive indicators.

In the course of the project, which ran from March till December 2005 in southern Kyrgyzstan and northern Tajikistan, a survey was conducted to study social tension and the possibility of conflict. The main focus of the survey was to consider the situation in the region from the gender point of view.

For this project the main UNIFEM partners were the UNDP Preventive Development Programme in Kyrgyzstan and the UNDP Trans-border Cooperation Programme in Tajikistan.

The short time allowed for project implementation and preparation of this report did not allow all the important problems connected with conflict potential to be described. For instance: there was no special focus on the issues of labour migration and the impact of drug trafficking on the general conflict potential of the region and it did not touch upon the topic of the role and impact of gender orientation of the mass media in conflict situations. Apart from that, many problems require further, deeper study and additional discussion due to the fact that this was the first attempt to monitor the situation in the potential conflict zone using gender-sensitive indicators. Clearly further work will be required both to improve the indicators and set tasks to conduct monitoring on a more systematic basis. Resolving these tasks will only be possible through the joint efforts of the governments of the countries of the Ferghana Valley, international development agencies, local communities and various groups of experts.

2. THE FERGHANA VALLEY: SITUATION ANALYSIS

General information on the Ferghana Valley

Brief information on the Ferghana Valley

Population breakdown:

South-east Uzbekistan (Namangan, Ferghana and Andijan oblasts)	6,983.632
Southern Kyrgyzstan (Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken oblasts)	2,497.827
Northern Tajikistan (Sughd oblast)	1,845.000

Gender separation:

Country	Women (%)	Men (%)
Uzbekistan	50.3	49.7
Kyrgyzstan	50.1	49.9
Tajikistan	50.0	49.0

General region territory more than 100,000 square km

Country	Total land area by country square km.	Area included in the Ferghana Valley zone square km
Uzbekistan	447,400	18,900
Kyrgyzstan	198,500	79,895
Tajikistan	143,100	26,100

Population density:

Country	Average for the country, Per square km	Average by oblasts included in the Ferghana Valley zone Per square km
Uzbekistan	57	356
Kyrgyzstan	25	32
Tajikistan	48	71

Main ethnic groups: Uzbek, Kyrgyz Tajik

Main economic activity: agriculture and livestock rearing farming

Main crops: Cotton, wheat, tobacco, rice, vegetables and meat.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferghana_Valley

The Ferghana Valley, situated in Central Asia covers an area of more than 100 thousand square kilometres and is home to more than 11 million people from three sovereign states – the Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, which were established after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, all of whom have territory in the Valley.

The Ferghana Valley zone includes the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, Andijan, Namangan and Ferghana oblasts of Uzbekistan and Sogdiskaya oblast of Tajikistan.

27% of the total population of Uzbekistan, 31% of the total population of Tajikistan and 51% of the population of Kyrgyzstan live in the Ferghana Valley⁶.

The region is densely populated. In the Uzbek part of the valley, the population density is the highest in the former Soviet Union countries – 356 persons per square km. More than half of the population in the region is under 30.







The population of the region is polyethnic. In the Kyrgyz part 65% of the population are ethnic Kyrgyz and 27% are Uzbeks; in the Uzbek area 84.5% of the population are ethnic Uzbek, 5% Tajik and about 3% are Kyrgyz; in Sughd oblast of Tajikistan 57% are ethnic Tajik, 31% Uzbek and 1% are Kyrgyz⁷.

⁶ UNIFEM, project document, 2004, October.

⁷ Ibid.

Map of the Ferghana Valley



-  Kyrgyzstan
-  Kyrgyzstan's part of the Ferghana Valley
-  Tajikistan
-  Tajikistan's part of the Ferghana Valley
-  Uzbekistan
-  Uzbekistan's part of the Ferghana Valley

History of conflicts in the Ferghana Valley

Since Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan gained their independence there have been a number of conflicts in the region, the most serious being:

1989 – a conflict between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks in Uzbekistan. Having started as a small dispute at the market about the price of strawberries, this conflict turned into a mass movement for social justice and the punishment of 'outsiders'. According to official data, 103 people were killed, more than 1,000 wounded and over 700 houses destroyed.

1990 – Osh-Uzgen conflict. The conflict arose from a dispute over irrigated land, and then became violent with elements of an ethnic purge. As a result, 300 people died and more than 1000 were wounded and over 5000 crimes were committed.

1992–1996 – the civil war in Tajikistan. During the years of fighting between the pro-communist forces and the Alliance of Islamic and Democratic parties more than 70,000 people died and about one million were displaced or became refugees and over 25000 women were widowed.

1999–2000 – the Batken events. In August 1999 groups of armed guerrillas invaded Batken oblast⁸ in Kyrgyzstan from Tajikistan and seized several foreigners as hostages. The guerrillas demanded safe passage through Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan. Having received a ransom, they released the hostages. In 2000 armed forces of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan again crossed into Kyrgyzstan and the clashes lasted for several months. In total, from August 22 till October 25 1999, 27 citizens of Kyrgyzstan died. In 2000 about 100–120 guerrillas and 33 Kyrgyz soldiers were killed⁹.

2005 – the March events in Kyrgyzstan. During the parliamentary election campaign of 2005 various meetings, protests and initiatives to unlawfully seize land and other property were staged throughout the country, especially in the southern areas. The involvement and active participation of women, especially women from poor families, was typical of those political events. As a result of the political upheaval and protests there was a regime change.

2005, May – the Andijan events. In May 2005 during a demonstration in Andijan, Uzbekistan, the authorities used military force. As a result, according to official information, 176 people died, but according to other sources, up to 750, including women, children and elderly people, were killed¹⁰.

⁸ Batken oblast was formed by splitting up Osh oblast at the end of 1999 in order to strengthen national security and border control and was an attempt to prevent an armed invasion of the country.

⁹ Tabyshaliev A. in cooperation with NSC KR. Kyrgyzstan: Common Country Assessment. Bishkek, 2001, p. 95.

¹⁰ International Crisis Group. Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising. Briefing № 38, Bishkek/Brussels, May, 25/2005.

Deep rooted risk factors of conflicts emerging in the Ferghana Valley

Territorial disputes

The current borders of the three countries of the Ferghana Valley were established in Soviet times and ignored the geographical, economic and ethnic mix of local residents. The region has suffered greatly from the national policy of the 1930s that transformed the previously interconnected areas into something like a puzzle.

Considerable Uzbek Diasporas in Tajikistan (25%) and Kyrgyzstan (14%) concentrated around the periphery of the Uzbek border have strengthened the Uzbek influence in both countries. During the Osh conflict in 1990 the Uzbek Diaspora voiced slogans supporting an autonomous state in the Valley, as did the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 1999–2000 during the invasion of Batken oblast of Kyrgyzstan by IMU guerrillas. After the Batken events, in contravention of international treaties, the Uzbeks unilaterally mined the borders with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and since then there have been cases of people and livestock being blown up by mines in trans-border areas. In June 2004 the government of Uzbekistan said it would de-mine the border and border areas of the Sokh and Shahimardan enclaves have been partially cleared.

Since the civil war in Tajikistan (1992–1997) the borders dreamed up in Soviet times have become reality for many ordinary people. Uzbekistan has introduced a visa entry regime for citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Although, the borders were established in 1991, they have not been fully delimited and are currently under discussion. According to information obtained by UNIFEM employees during an interview with the Head of the Kyrgyz Demarcation Commission in October 2003, there are about 100 disputed points between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and consensus on many parts along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border has not yet been reached. There are several enclaves in the valley. Disputed areas are mostly fertile land with strategic access to water sources.

In spite of the fact that since the 1950s there have been working groups and demarcation commissions, the process of boundary demarcation and delimitation is not yet complete due to various reasons, including a lack of cooperation between the interested parties and inadequate implementation of the agreements already reached. Territorial disputes are often the subject of conflicts between communities in trans-border areas¹¹. There have been cases of land misappropriation by residents of neighbouring countries¹².

¹¹ Early Warning Report. Preventive Development Programme. UNDP 2004, pp. 27–33.

¹² Information on disputed areas can be found in: Report on a sociological survey by the UNIFEM Project in Kyrgyzstan, Women's rights to land and sustainable livelihood. Legal assistance component. Bishkek, 2005, Report in Brief.

In the opinion of many residents the conflicts are caused not so much by the existing disputed areas or undefined borders, but by the establishment of border and Customs checkpoints, limiting people's free movement across the borders. There is also racial discrimination by the Customs and border services and the authorities of the neighbouring state.

For instance, as Reeves¹³ wrote, in January 2003, citizens of both countries destroyed border checkpoints established earlier between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan around the Voruhsky enclave and although the reason was the dissatisfaction of the people of both countries with fees and bribery, this event was considered in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, as a further indicator of interethnic tension. The author says that people believe that the conflict is not between the Tajiks and Kyrgyz but between the state and the ordinary people. Similar reviews of boundary incidents are often considered from the point of view of the state structures of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Social and economic factors

With the collapse of the Soviet Union the countries of Central Asia lost their settled economic ties and traditional markets. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were the poorest countries in the Soviet Union. For instance, in 1990 Tajikistan had the lowest GDP per capita among all Soviet republics; about 47% of the budget revenue of Tajikistan came from subsidies out of the central Soviet Union budget and in Kyrgyzstan alone direct centralized subsidies amounted to approximately one seventh of GDP, disregarding hidden donations through price policy.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union all financial inputs to the former Central Asian countries ceased, crippling their economies. Unemployment has soared to dangerous levels and in the Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley 35% of the workforce is unemployed, including most of the under 25's.

There has been a sharp growth in migration in the region. According to some assessments, Tajikistan has lost about 11% of its population as a result of migration¹⁴ since 1989, Uzbekistan – about 4%, and Kyrgyzstan – more than 7%¹⁵. The majority of migrants were representatives of non-indigenous nationalities, leaving for political reasons to go to Russia and other republics during the first years after the collapse of the USSR. The other migrants are labour migrants, leaving their countries in search of work in the neighbouring Ferghana Valley countries or Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

¹³ Reeves M. Locating danger: conflict science and the search for stability in the Ferghana Valley border areas. *Central Asia Survey* 24 (1), p. 68, March 2005.

¹⁴ The demographic situation was also influenced by the civil war from 1992–1997, as a consequence of which about half a million people emigrated to Russia and about 70,000 to Northern Tajikistan. Source: Ecological effectiveness activity review. Tajikistan. UN European Economic Commission. Geneva, 2004. Available online at: <http://www.unece.org/env/epr/studies/Tajikistan/russian/Chapter00.pdf>.

¹⁵ Human Development in Central Asia Report. Regional UNDP office for European and CIS countries, 2005, p. 160.

Poverty, unemployment and lack of natural resources, including land and water, has led to the population, particularly women, being forced to seek employment in the informal sector. According to estimates, women currently account for almost 80% of small informal traders, moving daily from market to market throughout the region.

In the majority of cases these migrants work in extremely difficult conditions, get minimal wages and are not protected by the law. The situation has been aggravated by the introduction of visa regimes and the complication of requirements for crossing borders and registering in the country of destination, along with a large number of abuses by border and Custom services. In spite of the existence of eternal friendship agreements between the countries of the region and numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements on different issues of cooperation, many issues remain unresolved. The differences in the positions of states on issues of trade policy, particularly regarding exporting and importing goods and crossing borders are serious obstacles for residents of the region and frequently lead to increased crime, illegal trade and other violations¹⁶.

Against a background of poverty, unemployment and lack of money, medical services have become inaccessible for a lot of people. There is a high incidence of TB, due to a lack and bad quality of water and cases of malaria have been reported.

The deterioration in the availability of public health and other social services in the last decade have created additional difficulties for women, since they bear responsibility for the family's health.

At the same time there has been a worsening of the reproductive health of men and women. As the number of doctors in villages is falling, the alarm should be raised that women's access to medical services is restricted owing to the existing patriarchal principles according to which men in the family prohibit women from being attended by male doctors.

Water shortages

Water is the most valuable resource in the dry climate of Central Asia and lack of water is the cause of many conflicts in communities. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have the main water supplies in the region. In Soviet times different parts of the valley were dependent on one another through a common network of water, energy and transport facilities. Frequently the interests and needs of the three countries for water contradict each other. Thus, for example, Kyrgyzstan uses the Syr-Darya River for generating electricity, very necessary in winter, whereas neighbouring Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan need water to irrigate their extensive cotton fields and market gardens in the summer.

¹⁶ Early Warning Report UNDP, 2004, pp. 29–30.

Inefficient water use in agriculture owing to the poorly functioning or entire failure of the existing drainage systems and irrigation canals aggravates the problem of water shortages, resulting in floods and increased soil salinity, which negatively impact the life of local communities and promote interethnic tension.

Water problems directly concern women, as it is they who are responsible for providing the family with water. Being the main agricultural workers they more frequently experience the difficulties caused by a lack of water for irrigation. According to the available data, about 60% of the 10 million population of the region has no access to good quality drinking water¹⁷. This problem is especially acute due to the high population density in the valley and has several aspects related to gender issues. Traditionally in the region, water is fetched by women and children and as a rule women use the water for cooking, washing and other everyday needs of the family. Due to a lack of good quality drinking water, people frequently use water from trenches, irrigation canals, and various reservoirs. Low water quality leads to the proliferation of various diseases and negatively impacts the reproductive health of men and women.

The problem with irrigation water is no less acute. Women are the main workers in the fields, working on their individual farms or as hired workers, thus, they are responsible for irrigating agricultural land and face the problem of conflicts in local communities caused by competition for irrigation water.

Drug trafficking

War and instability in neighbouring Afghanistan and Tajikistan have contributed to the growth of drug trafficking and militarisation of the region. After the defeat of the Taliban, an unlimited flow of drugs has poured from Afghanistan into Central Asia.

Mass unemployment, political instability and the separation of Central Asian countries are favourable grounds for increased drug trafficking. It is reported that in Tajikistan paramilitary groups are involved in drug trafficking, it being their main source of funding. It is believed that up to 65% of drugs originating from Afghanistan enter European markets via the Central Asian region¹⁸.

Drug trafficking is the principal source of finance for criminal and extremist groups and organizations, some of which are presumably linked to global terrorist groups. What is worrying is that not only poor people, but also civil servants and officials are involved in drug trafficking. There has been an alarming trend for women and children to be involved in drug trafficking and they quite often agree to do this in exchange for food and clothes.

¹⁷ Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan: focus on drinking water and sanitary issues. IRIN Agency. Available online at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=37655>

¹⁸ Tabyshaliev A. Regional cooperation to prevent conflict. Central Asia: a New Space for Cooperation. Institute for Regional Studies, Bishkek, 2000, p. 24.

Alongside the growth in drug trafficking, the number of drug addicts has increased, which represents a threat to public health and causes increased levels of crime. Higher numbers of injecting drug addicts have led to a higher incidence of HIV/AIDS infection.

Religious risk factor

The Valley is known to be the focus of religious extremism in Central Asia. The political and economic exclusion of young men and instability following the war in Tajikistan created ideal conditions for forming an armed Islamic opposition.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) that has emerged from the Ferghana Valley has cooperated with the Tajik United Opposition, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. With the aim of establishing an Islamic Caliphate and being active in four countries – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan and trained by Al-Qaeda, members of the IMU invaded Batken oblast in Kyrgyzstan in 1999–2000. This radical movement supports the imposition of Shariat law, which considerably limits women's rights.

Another trans-national religious-political party, Hizb-ut-Tahrir (the party of Islamic Liberation)¹⁹, propagates a non-violent route to a theocratic state. Hizb-ut-Tahrir has had some success in the region not only in well-organized underground activity, but also in financing party members, which is important given the high levels of poverty and unemployment. Adherents of the idea of creating an Islamic Caliphate in the region propagate free trade and free passage between Moslem countries and establishing social justice.

In spite of 70 years of atheist propaganda, Islam plays an important role in the lives of people living in the region. The disintegration of the former soviet republics has led to a lot of Moslem relics in the region being on the territory of various independent sovereign states, which limits pilgrims' access, the majority of whom are women and children.

¹⁹ Hizb-ut-Tahrir (party of Islamic Liberation) was set up in the Middle East and became known in Central Asia only in the mid 1990s. Representatives of this party state that their activities are peaceful and they are not engaged in political struggles. Their aim is to establish an Islamic caliphate in Central Asia. The governments of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia consider the party to be an extremist organisation and currently hundreds of its members are in prison or are under investigation for being involved in religious extremism. Source: RFE/RL Central Asia Report, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2006, January 19.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to provide good quality monitoring of the situation in the Ferghana Valley, gender-sensitive indicators²⁰ were developed, based on the classification proposed by Schmeidle and Pizza-Lopez in their work, *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action*²¹.

The UNIFEM CIS Regional office, project staff and key project partners, such as the UN Preventive Development Programme in Kyrgyzstan and the UN Cross-Border Cooperation Programme in Tajikistan, helped develop the indicators. The indicators were divided into qualitative and quantitative ones and classified into four categories: socio-economic, including the access of men and women to economic and natural resources, the position of young people in the region, violence against women and the level of women's access to decision-making. The total number of indicators developed was 26.

Monitoring was conducted in the Jalal- Abad, Osh and Batken oblasts of Kyrgyzstan and the Sogdyskaya oblast of Tajikistan, covering a total of 14 communities in Tajikistan and 26 in Kyrgyzstan²². 29 monitors were recruited (14 women and 15 men) to collect data – 16 in Kyrgyzstan and 13 in Tajikistan. The monitors were selected and trained by the UNIFEM project and all of them actually live and work in the communities in the studied area.

During the monitoring both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used, in particular discussions in *focus groups*, *questioning*, *individual in-depth interviews* and *case studies*. During the monitoring a total of 1510 people in Kyrgyzstan and 1537 in Tajikistan took part in the *Access of men and women to economic and natural resources survey* and 514 in Kyrgyzstan and 520 in Tajikistan took part in the *Problems and perspectives of Young People in the Ferghana Valley* survey. As part of the youth factor study in the region an electronic forum, *Problems and perspectives of Young People of the Ferghana Valley* was conducted on the websites of the news agencies *Akipress.kg* and *Ferghana.ru*²³.

²⁰ See annex 4. A list of gender-sensitive indicators.

²¹ Sussane Schmeidl with Eugenia Piza-Lopez. *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action*. International Alert, June, 2002 pp. 13–23.

²² See annex 3. Target communities.

²³ *Fergana.ru*: <http://forum.ferghana.ru/viewforum.php?f=17>; *Akipress.kg*: <http://ferghana.akipress.org/youth>

4. GENDER INEQUALITY IN ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Ownership and control of property: a tradition of female inequality

Women's restricted access to resources is largely due to their unequal status in owning and controlling property. The monitoring results clearly confirm that women are very rarely owners of a land parcel and immovable property. Thus, to the question, *In whose name is the land²⁴ of the family normally registered?* the answers were as follows: In Kyrgyzstan 81% of the interviewed men and 77% of the interviewed women replied that a family's land parcel is registered in the husband's name. The next preference is the husband's parents. This is the opinion of 10.7% of men and 10.1% of women. Only 2.6% of men and 6.7% of women stated that the family's property is often registered in the wife's name (see *Diagram 1*).

According to respondents the family status of women to a large extent determines differences in access to land resources. In particular it was mentioned that if a woman was married there no injustice had been done to her in the distribution of land because the land was allocated to members of the family. As a rule land parcels were distributed in such a way that the parcels of land of members of one family were close to one another and registering land in the name of a husband was not considered a violation of a woman's rights under the existing traditional perceptions.

Women who were not married at the moment of distribution of privatized land were included in land parcels of the families of either a brother or a father. In divorces, women's fathers frequently act in the name of the women. From this we can see a tendency not to consider women as having an independent right to property. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that for women it is very problematic to contest the role of the head of a family and household, especially in rural areas. Patriarchal traditions, on which relationships with relatives and community connections are based, can work as a kind of social protection mechanism, as a means of mutual assistance, which is important for women when there is weak state support of the social sector.

²⁴ In Kyrgyzstan a land parcel is defined as a plot of land for agricultural use (excluding pastures) given in ownership to a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic in accordance with the procedure determined by the Government of the KR. For more details see UNIFEM/Kyrgyzstan, 2005.

In Tajikistan a land parcel is defined as a plot of land for agricultural use given in ownership to a citizen of Tajikistan in accordance with the procedure determined by the Government of Tajikistan. For more details see UNIFEM/ Tajikistan, 2005.

Diagram 1. Registration of a land parcel for members of the family in southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

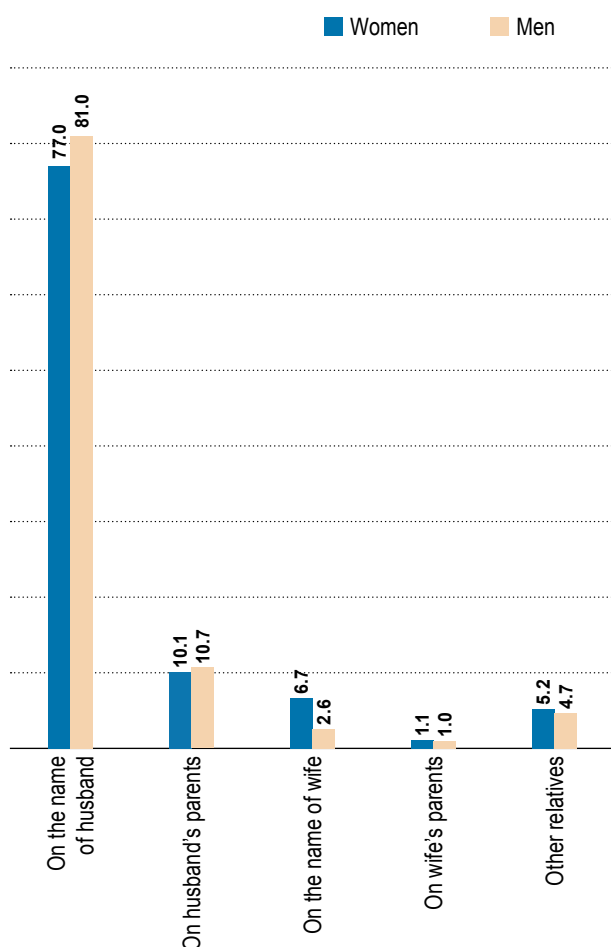
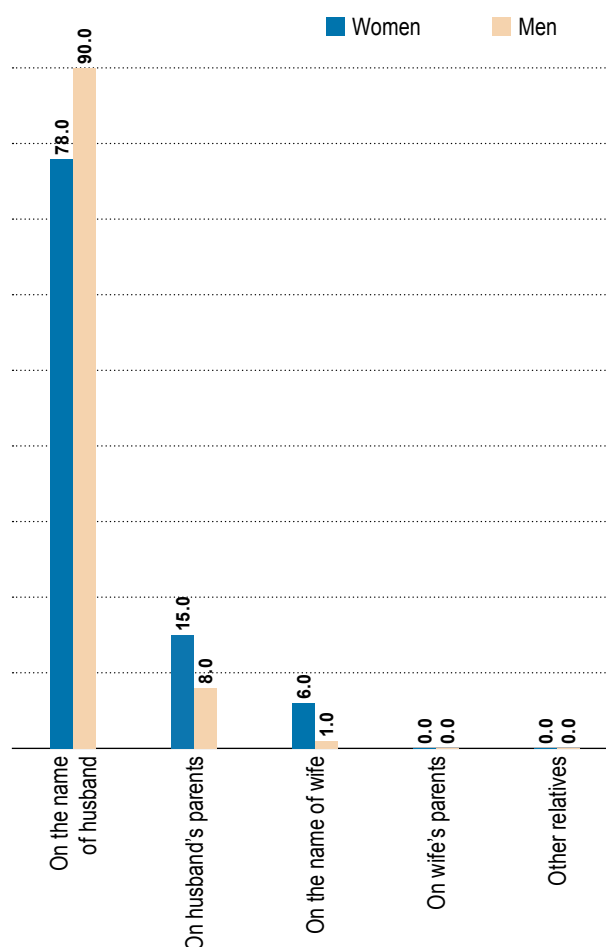


Diagram 2. Registration of a land parcel for members of the family in northern Tajikistan (%)



Our traditions do not yet allow a woman to say "this is mine", (if) your husband is alive, it is not decent to declare your rights to something

(man, 58 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Jamoat²⁵ Kistakuz, Tajikistan).

Men and women have land of the same quality if they are part of one family because a land parcel is allocated in one place to a family and a husband's parcel will be close to his wife and children's parcel. Another issue arose when a woman was divorced or widowed and most frequently they were the last in line to receive land and when there was little fertile land they received land that was not very good

(woman, 67 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Suzak rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

A woman becomes the head of a household when she is widowed or divorced. A single woman and her family are more vulnerable when addressing many issues, including those connected with obtaining land. As a rule, widows or divorced women were the last to receive land and it was of poor quality.

Thus women without men's protection have less chance of receiving their due land parcel and it is necessary to mention that the status of a divorced woman is even lower than the status of a widow. Widows at least can rely on some support from the family of their husbands, especially when they have children. By accepting leadership of the family after the death of their husbands, they also have a chance to

²⁵ Jamoat – local community council (village government).

influence decisions and can become owners. Differences in the position and possibilities for women depending on their status in the family is clearly demonstrated in cases when a woman has an independent business and tries to protect her rights.

Besides the factors connected with family status, the low level of female representation in local government makes a considerable impact on women claiming or contesting their right to property. Without representation in bodies of power women find themselves excluded from the decision-making process on the key issues of redistribution of resources.

In Tajikistan the inequality of women in controlling resources can be seen even more clearly than in Kyrgyzstan because land there is not in private ownership and the right to use it is registered with a special land certificate. As was mentioned in UNIFEM assessments, these certificates are normally issued in the name of a husband, brother or in the case of a widow – even in the name of her eldest son. Less than 50% of the interviewed women from families where they had received land parcels had been able to include their names on the document²⁶. As of May 27th 2004 according to the registry of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan, only 6% of the total number of registered dehqan (farmers) farms had been registered in the name of women. In 1999 the figure was 3.9%²⁷. According to the results of this monitoring the majority of respondents also acknowledge that in the overwhelming majority of cases land parcel registration is made in the name of a husband or his relatives (see *Diagram 2*).

The UNIFEM surveys demonstrate that the widely held opinion that women are not very good managers and are unable to organize work on the land, prevents the women of Tajikistan from standing up for their rights to land. There is also an opinion that women use credits

According to the law a divorced woman can sell her land, but in practice, frequently a woman cannot sell her land. Even if someone is interested in buying the land, in solidarity with her former husband nobody will buy it. Her parcel is very small, about 3-7 hundred parts of land and it is among the land parcel of her former husband and that is why there are few buyers

(man, 43 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Uzgen rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

Mairamkan, 39 years old, divorced her husband two years ago and returned to her native village. With great difficulty she split the land parcel she held with her husband and exchanged it with a former resident of her native village and now owns a land parcel of 60 hundred parts in her native village. This year Mairamkan started cultivating her land. As is the case in our traditional society she had the status of a divorced woman and a woman, who according to villagers, is of dubious character, who had obtained her land through a court. Every day and everywhere she went, she felt she was blamed. Once in summer at the irrigation shed there were 15 male landowners, who took turns watering their land. The men ignored Mairamkan's numerous requests to irrigate her parcel. Then she started threatening them but the men only laughed. Fearing that she would not get any water and that she and her children would have no crops, she was driven to taking extreme measures. She stood near the irrigation shed, took off her clothes and threatened the men that if nobody turned on the water she would tell the militia that they had tried to rape her. She stood like that till the evening when she got cold and didn't water her land

(case study, Kyrgyzstan).

²⁶ Use of agreements on human rights to protect the rights of rural women to land in Tajikistan, UNIFEM, 2004, p. 18.

²⁷ Women's rights in the course of land reform in the Republic of Tajikistan, UNIFEM, 2005, p. 28.

Privileges were granted to men because (the decision was made by the village municipality) mainly male village municipality officials participated in land distribution. It was easier for men to negotiate with men to get land and as a result they received better parcels

(man, 23 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Alay rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

Many women work only to get essentials – potatoes and carrots – and do not expect to receive any money. They are almost never paid money on the kolkhozes. A dehkan farm is only a sham. In reality it is a copy of a kolkhoz. Khukumats (local authorities) as in Soviet times, plan the harvests. There are monopolies – a company called "Cotton" buys cotton very cheaply ...

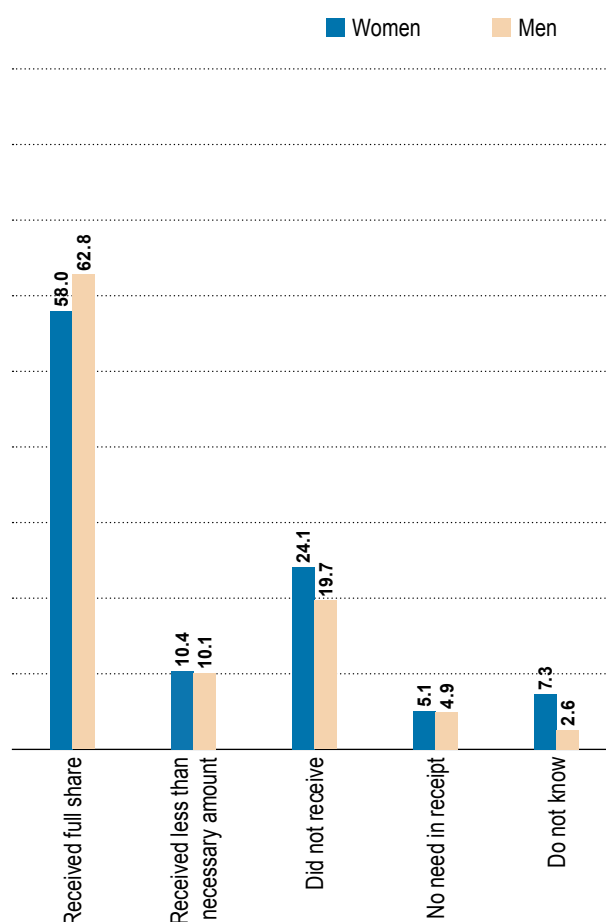
(from information provided by monitors, Tajikistan).

ineffectively, though the current statistics for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan show that women-only groups of credit recipients have high repayment rates²⁸. This form of hidden, unacknowledged and frequently not realized discrimination can make a considerable impact on the decision of officials engaged in land reform implementation²⁹.

Women's assessment of their entrepreneurial abilities is influenced by the opinion of their immediate circle of people, which is frequently based on prejudices and stereotypes. When success is traditionally considered as a male characteristic a woman, who claims to be a successful entrepreneur, is rarely considered in a positive light. Women who are successful in business or manufacturing are believed to be unhappy in their family life or do not have high moral principles.

Meanwhile, women are currently the main labour force in agriculture. As in Soviet times women's work picking cotton and tobacco continues to be cheap and economically irrational. This situation is especially evident in connection with the mass labour migration of men³⁰. For instance: in 33%

Diagram 3. Receiving a land parcel in land distribution. Southern Kyrgyzstan(%)



²⁸ El-Pikir Public Opinion Study Centre, Institute for Assessing Development Public Association. – UNIFEM, 2005.

²⁹ Use of agreements on human rights to protect the rights of rural women to land in Tajikistan. – UNIFEM 2004 pp. 5–7.

³⁰ The scale of this in the region can be judged based on the number of labour migrants: in Kyrgyzstan there are 350–500 thousand migrants and in Tajikistan – 650 thousand migrants. Of labour migrants leaving Tajikistan 85% are men and 15% women, whilst from Kyrgyzstan the figures are 60% men and 40% women. S. Olimova, Migration in modern Tajikistan. Demoscope Weekly, #223–224, 2005, November 21 – December 4. Available online at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0223/>

Diagram 4. Level of awareness about rights to land and property. Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

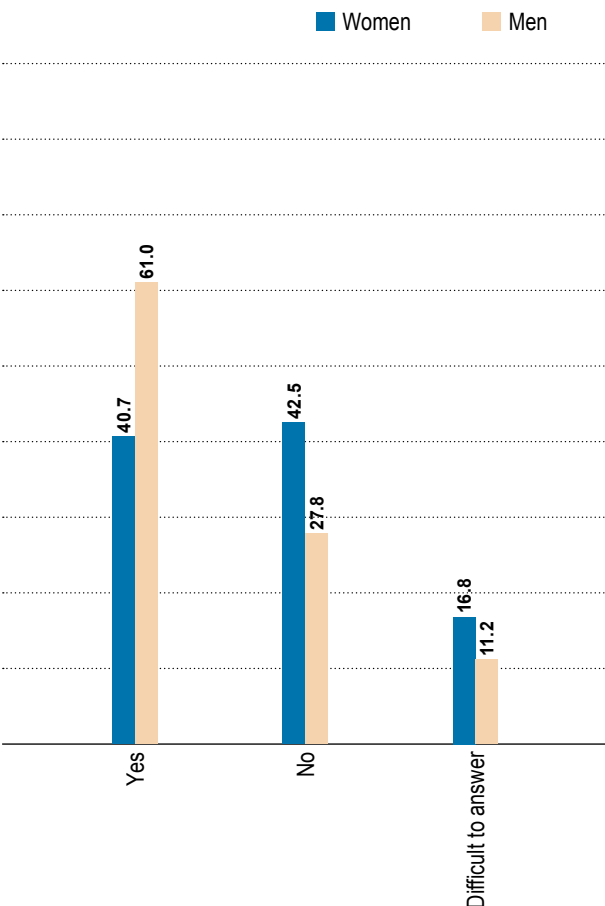
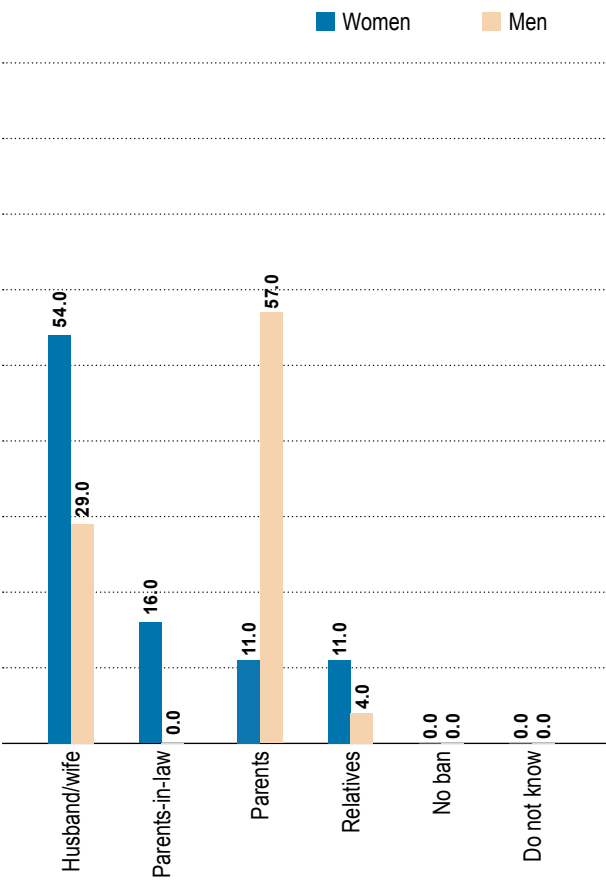


Diagram 5. If there is a ban on receiving information about the rights to land and property, who imposes it...? Northern Tajikistan (%)



of households in Tajikistan there are no men mainly due to migration³¹. Migration experts draw attention to the fact that gaps have appeared due to labour migration out of villages and they are most frequently filled not by introducing modern machinery but by increased use of female and child labour and this in turn, leads to further lower productivity, manual labour and the dissemination of primitive forms of work in the agrarian sector³².

In general, women more frequently than men stated that they did not know whether they had received land or not (see *Diagram 3*), and also among women respondents there were more who did not know about the quality of the received land. In the course of monitoring it was observed that women assessed the level of their knowledge about the rights to land lower than men (see *Diagram 4*).

Frequently women’s non-awareness of their rights is due to a ban on receiving information usually imposed by husbands, parents and relatives (see *Diagram 5*). But bans on receiving information are not

³¹ Use of agreements on human rights to protect the rights of rural women to land in Tajikistan UNIFEM, 2004, p. 10.
³² Material from the workshop on Development and food security strategies in mountain regions of Central Asia. – Dushanbe 2005.

Men and women do not know about their rights because there is no information, especially for women. Men might attend meetings and have some information but women sit at home and don't know anything

(woman, 38 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Aravan rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

I married 21 years ago and have not received a land parcel from them (father and mother in law), I do not have even 1.5 hundred parts (of land) for myself. I applied to the kolkhoz chairman but he turned down my request. Now I want to argue about it and get some land ...

(woman, 39 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Jamoat Vorukh, Tajikistan).

Women frequently apply to a village municipality, women's councils or Courts of Elders and LARC (the Legal Assistance to Rural Citizens project of the Swiss Coordination Office on Land Reform), who earlier provided free of charge advice and this year are charging for it

(man, 48 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Leilyak rayon Kyrgyzstan).

mentioned by Kyrgyzstan respondents among the very important reasons for non-awareness of their rights by both women and men.

In Tajikistan even men frequently face bans on receiving information. For instance: 57% of the interviewed men specified bans on receiving information imposed by parents. This may be due to parents' caution because of the doubtful legality of the information received and fear of their children getting involved in terrorist and extremist religious groups. Parents may also be concerned that receiving information about rights might not be welcomed by representatives of the authorities and could become a reason for young men being arrested by the law enforcement bodies. This high level of parents' concern needs to be studied in more detail from the point of view of forecasting and early warning of conflicts on the grounds of violation of human rights.

One of the factors influencing the status of women in disposing of property and resources is the

established custom whereby all property belongs to a husband or a husband's parents. A woman and her parents occupy a secondary position. Under these conditions a woman is unable to claim her rights because it might lead to her husband or his relatives physically assaulting her. Nowadays we have practically no cases of a married woman demanding and registering property, in particular, a land parcel in her name. Thus the situation is best described by a common saying: "duhtar – moli kas", which means "a daughter belongs to others" in Tajikistan and in Kyrgyzstan: "kyzga kyrk zherden tyiuu", which means, "for girls there are 40 bans".

Women's rights protection mechanisms are an important aspect of the problem of women's unequal access to resources. Discussions in focus groups discovered that as a whole both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan women prefer applying to the authorities to protect their rights to land. For instance: they initially apply to ayil-okmotu and jamoats. In general, young women, considered 'active and knowledgeable' by local

residents, protect their rights to land and property, particularly when getting divorced.

In recent years there has been a noticeable strengthening of the role of informal, traditional legal institutions. More and more women are applying to informal local government institutions, namely, Courts of Elders (Councils of the elderly) and women's councils. According to respondents, this is because the services of informal institutions are free. They also reported that the actions by the authorities and law enforcement bodies are seen as corrupt, unfair and subject to bureaucratic delays.

Traditional institutions of local governance – the Courts of Elders, *makhalla* (groups of neighbours) and women's councils – are more frequently guided by the norms of common law, Adat, and guided by men's interests and play a contradictory role in gender-related situations.

About 52% of women and 50% of men in Kyrgyzstan stated that land disputes are more frequently resolved in favour of men. Only 2% of women and 4% of men believe that gender is not important in resolving disputes. In Tajikistan more than 70% of respondents of both genders specified land disputes being resolved in favour of men. Under such conditions women's problems have little chance of being resolved. The negative consequences of the existence of such types of barriers for women, especially rural women, were mentioned in the Report on Human Development in Central Asia, where in particular, it is mentioned that due to preference being given to men under traditional law, there is increased gender inequality in access to land³³.

As a rule, traditional common law takes precedence over legislation on issues of marriage, divorce and inheritance. Even if a woman knows that she has the right to land she will not fight for it because she will be hindered by behavioural and cultural codes, which will mean that the woman has discredited herself and washed her dirty linen in public and brought shame on her husband and family. Thus women try to correspond to the traditional norms and rules of behaviour.

You see our women are aware that after they visit legal and law enforcement bodies, the family breaks up. In order to preserve the family they use traditional ways of resolving problems

(in-depth interview, woman, 52 years old, Tajikistan).

Naryngul, 48 years old, the leader of an NGO, 5 years ago (in 2000) received a grant from an international organization to plant trees in her native village to help the 6 poorest young families and 4 widows build houses. Villagers planted the saplings on what was then un-owned land. The trees had grown and it was planned to start construction in spring last year, but the land, on which the trees were growing was privatized by a local rich man with the help of the head of the local municipality. The owner is claiming the trees and this has led to conflict. The NGO members and young people concerned have applied to many authorities: Courts of Elders and the village municipality, which recommended they go to court but court fees are too expensive for poor families. They are tired of trying to find out about their rights among the state structures because they do not do what they are supposed to and do not fight poverty and if someone wants to do so they hamper and hinder them

(From monitors' information, Kyrgyzstan).

³³ Report on Human Development in Central Asia. Regional UNDP office on the countries of Europe and CIS, 2005, p. 182.

The situation is problematic because women frequently may not know their rights either under Moslem or secular law³⁴. This applies especially to divorce when according to Shariat law women have the right to a share of the property. The issues of protecting legal rights are even more difficult in the Ferghana Valley because there are widespread unofficial and polygamous marriages based on religious rituals. Though many parents encourage their daughters to get married officially, this frequently takes place after the birth of several children. Taking into account these tendencies, it is of some concern that the gender statistics in the region do not adequately reflect at least some



of the dynamics of the scale of the spread of traditions and their impact on cases of polygamous unofficial marriages and divorces³⁵.

The limited access of women to controlling property considerably influences the chances of women receiving loans and using them to conduct independent economic activity. Frequently women are the main beneficiaries of micro-credit organizations. Without adequate property for collateral and information about their rights they simply cannot receive medium sized and large credits³⁶. The value of the received credit does not allow women to engage in more profitable types of activity.

If a credit organization requires substantial collateral, a house, the application is made by a man as head of the family. When a loan is small and the collateral is a TV or a carpet, it is taken by a woman

(man, 43 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Suzak rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

Heads of credit unions are mainly men because they need to be well educated and have money and connections and women do not have them

(woman, 43 years old, focus-group "Access to resources", Leilyak rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

Livestock breeding, mostly frequently engaged in by men, is considered a more economically profitable activity. Traditionally men are engaged in livestock breeding and medium sized and large credits are necessary for this type of activity and the cost of loans can be quickly recovered through the sale of cattle, milk and other products.

Having received a credit, women, for instance, buy cattle for subsequent breeding. That is why micro credits are mainly used by women for small-scale trading rather than for agriculture.

Land cultivation with its numerous challenges related to lack of water, machinery, degradation of soil etc. together with difficulties in finding markets for agricultural products, leaves peasants with practically no profit. A monitor in one of the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan states

³⁴ Sabates-Wheeler R. Land Rights and Economic Security for Rural Women in Tajikistan. UNIFEM, Dushanbe, 2002, p.11.

³⁵ See also Report on Human Development in Central Asia. Regional UNDP office on the countries of Europe and CIS, 2005, pp. 183–184.

³⁶ El-Pikir Public Opinion Centre and the Institute for Assessing Development Public Association, UNIFEM, 2005.

that his ownership of 6 hundred parts of land disbars him from being counted as unemployed. “At the same time – he continued – even people who have parcels of 35 hundred parts cannot feed themselves and on bare land it is impossible to feed a family because it costs an average of 20–25 thousand soms³⁷ to cultivate one hectare. One hectare of cotton field yields 2 tons of cotton. At a cotton price of 8–10 som per kilogram a family earns only 20 thousand soms for the entire year and thus have nothing”³⁸.

About 70% of respondents both male and female, believe that the use of small credits by women improves the standard of living in the short-term, but the results of discussions in focus groups showed that people are very worried that small credits are ineffective as a means of poverty elimination due to high interest rates and the short term of loan repayments. As a rule micro-credits without collateral carry high interest rates, for instance in the FINCA Micro-finance Company (FINCA) the interest rate is 48% and Kyrgyz Agricultural Financial Corporation (KAFC) and UNDP – 12%³⁹. The schemes of such credit agencies are usually based on collective responsibility of self-help groups.

A sociological survey of beneficiaries of a UNDP poverty reduction programme showed that the main motivation for villagers joining such groups is their families’ poverty and lack of jobs; 44% of the interviewed beneficiaries stated that their income generating activity helps them feed their family but the income is clearly not enough⁴².

If a man gets a loan he uses the money for agriculture or livestock breeding and a women uses it for small-scale trading in a komok⁴⁰ or the nearest market. Women cannot use money properly and go bankrupt

(man, 41 years old, focus-group “Access to resources”, Suzak rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

In Jalal-Abad there is a (micro-credit) organization called Finca, which I dislike very much, as they give money to women but there are many cases where the women are left without a house and property

(woman, 49 years old, focus-group “Access to resources”, Suzak rayon, Kyrgyzstan)⁴¹.

Women take out loans and give them to men. (They) sell pips and dried apricots. But everything is processed by ...women ...They collect pips, sort and pack apricots and the men sell and buy. Money is in men’s hands

(woman, 47 years old, focus-group “Access to resources”, Tajikistan).



³⁷ USD \$1 is approximately 41 Kyrgyz soms.

³⁸ See also the UNIFEM Report, Economic and legal problems of residents of trans-border rayons in the Batken oblast of Kyrgyzstan Bishkek, 2005.

³⁹ Report on the survey, Monitoring the implementation of the NPRS in areas of social mobilization, development of small and medium business, micro-crediting and employment at local level, UNDP, Bishkek, 2004, p. 67.

⁴⁰ A komok is a kiosk.

⁴¹ Sociological survey report, Determining the needs and demands of beneficiaries of a UNDP programme on poverty reduction in the area of small and medium business for developing income generation UNDP, Bishkek, 2003, pp. 8 and 65.

⁴² Complicated schemes for forming and disbursing credit resources, coming through several agencies and received by final beneficiaries with “accrued” interest rates were described in the report of a UNFEM project in Kyrgyzstan, Access of rural women to economic resources. UNIFEM, Bishkek, 2005, pp. 34–35.

According to the monitoring results, more than half of respondents both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan do not know of the existence of special lending programmes for women. This shows the inadequate number of targeted credit programmes for women and low awareness of the population of the existing programmes.

The effectiveness of how women's micro-credits are used is clearly influenced by the fact that frequently men and other family members control the received credits and their use. Frequently, whereas women are the loan recipients and bear the responsibility for repaying them, they do not spend them, as the men in the family, usually their husbands do this.

Summing up the section:

The above-mentioned material on the regional peculiarities of women's inequality in access to resources allows the following conclusions to be drawn, which nevertheless require further study:

- According to respondents' assessments, the highest priority problems of the region include lack of water and land resources, unemployment and poverty. It is remarkable that unclear boundaries and disputed areas were not considered by respondents to be key problems in the region and are primarily considered as political restrictions making it very difficult to do business, receive salaries and maintain contacts with relatives due to the need to cross the existing borders almost on a daily basis.
- Differences in men and women's perceptions of the most crucial problems of the region, which are mainly determined by the gender separation of labour. In the opinion of female respondents the zones of special tension after the collapse of the Soviet Union are the socio-cultural and welfare infrastructure of the region, such as roads, hospitals, schools, bath-houses and the destruction of the environment.
- Although they have demonstrated great abilities in adapting to new economic and social conditions, women have nevertheless found themselves restricted to subsistence economics – street markets and small and shuttle businesses. Women form the majority of workers in the agricultural sector.
- In the region there are still strong traditions of men owning and controlling the main economic resources. According to the monitoring results, in more than 80% of cases land and other property is registered in the name of men, i.e. husband, father, brother or son.

- There is inequality in land ownership and control of property and this restricts women's possibilities of breaking out of poverty, in particular through the use of various credits. The need for collateral to raise medium and large loans excludes women and as a rule they can only rely on small credits, which do not allow them to develop sustainable forms of business. The subsistence level businesses women are forced into are aimed at satisfying everyday family needs. Many micro-crediting schemes are based on the fact that women are responsible for repayments, which frequently hide high interest rates that reduce loans' effectiveness and frequently women who have taken out loans cannot use it how they like because husbands or other family members control the money.
- When looking to protect their rights women more frequently than men apply to informal authorities, such as Courts of Elders (village elders) and women's and makhalla (community, neighbours) councils because official court services are expensive and applying to state structures frequently entails bribing officials. It might also be because women are frequently prohibited from independent and direct contact with people outside the family, especially in Tajikistan. It was also mentioned that women do not have full information about the norms of common, religious or secular law.
- Women being restricted to family matters, together with the limited possibilities for protecting their rights through formal institutions, have led to a strengthening of the influence of common law – Adat. In addressing the many issues of interaction in society, including property issues, common law favours male interests. Thus, women find themselves facing double barriers increasing their inequality in access to resources and ownership and management of rights to land and other assets.

5. YOUTH, RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC RISK FACTORS

The population of the Ferghana Valley is young and increasing quickly. In Tajikistan, 52% of the population is under 20⁴³. In the Ferghana part of Kyrgyzstan, the figure is about 40%⁴⁴. Some studies indicate that a disproportionate number of young people lead to demographic bulges in the structure of a society and this is linked to higher conflict potential⁴⁵.



What are the reasons for such a statement? Firstly, due to age-specific characteristics, under certain conditions young people can form or be involved in social movements and ideologies, for example, movements giving them a feeling of common identity, and this can be both positive and negative for society. Secondly, such high numbers of young people put additional burdens on society because of increased pressure on education, health care and other public services, which are a drain on the resources of

weak states. In addition, for various reasons young people are unable to be integrated into society and social relationships and lose the opportunity to obtain the skills required for a peaceful life.

After the collapse of the USSR, the young people of the states in the Ferghana Valley faced many problems connected with the difficulties of transition, formation of independent states, break up of existing economic relations and falling living standards, stratification of society and high unemployment. The civil war in Tajikistan had a very negative impact on the population of the country. Poor access to education, its bad quality, unemployment and lack of an effective youth policy are the key problems for young people in the region and they increase the possibility of conflict.

⁴³ Tulsy M. Results of the Census of Tajikistan in 2000. Demoscope Weekly, № 171–172, 27 September – 10 October 2004. Available online at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0171/analit07.php>

⁴⁴ Available online at: <http://www.turkiye.net/sota/sota.html>

⁴⁵ Goldstone 1991, Fuller and Pitts 1990. Available online at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM_Youth_and_Conflict_Toolkit_April_2005.pdf

Education

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, access to education by the population of the Ferghana Valley states fell. State spending on education plummeted after the states gained their independence. From 1990–2001, expenditure on education fell from 9.7% to 2.4% of GDP in Kyrgyzstan and from 8.3% to 3.1% in Tajikistan⁴⁶. In 2001, in Kyrgyzstan, spending on education per capita was only 32.9% of the 1990 level in comparable prices⁴⁷.

According to some assessments, in Tajikistan during the civil war a fifth of all schools were destroyed and hundreds of teachers left the country or changed their professions. According to the data of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan, ten thousand teachers are needed to restore full staffing levels. In Kyrgyzstan, compared to 1990, the number of pre-school institutions has fallen by 70%⁴⁸.

The previous system of pre-school education has been destroyed. Surveys have shown there is serious concern among both women and men regarding the lack of kindergartens and other facilities for infants. According to the monitoring, 54% of men and 49% of women in Kyrgyzstan and 70% of those who responded in Tajikistan said that they couldn't get their children into kindergartens, which on the one hand, influences the quality of school education and, on the other hand is a problem for many young women who have limited employment, education or active social life opportunities.

One of the key issues is equal access to education for girls and boys under conditions of increasing poverty and deteriorating educational infrastructure. Those who monitored the project noticed that women are concerned about the poor quality of education and limited access to education – at present girls are being prohibited from going to school, especially high school. In both Tajik and Kyrgyz families, girls often do not attend school because they have to help their mothers look after the home.

Another reason for non-attendance at school by girls in Tajikistan is the ban on wearing the ruimol (headscarf) in some schools. On October 19th 2005, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan decided to ban the wearing of khidzhabs⁴⁹ (scarves) in all secular schools and those who do not comply with the law will be expelled. Some religious Tajik families consider the action of the school administration as disrespect to and a violation of their beliefs and as a sign of protest they do not allow their daughters to go to school.

Knowledge that women have gained at school and university is uncalled for in daily life and the interest of women in events happening

⁴⁶ Report on Human Development in Central Asia. UNDP Regional Bureau on European and CIS countries. 2005, p. 150.

⁴⁷ UN. Kyrgyz Republic. Report on Implementation of the Declaration on Millennium Development Goals. Bishkek 2003, p.180.

⁴⁸ Report on the Status of women in the Kyrgyz Republic 2000–2005. National Council for Women, Family and Gender Development under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek, 2004, p. 23.

⁴⁹ Khidzhab – the scarf that Muslim women wear according to Shariat law.

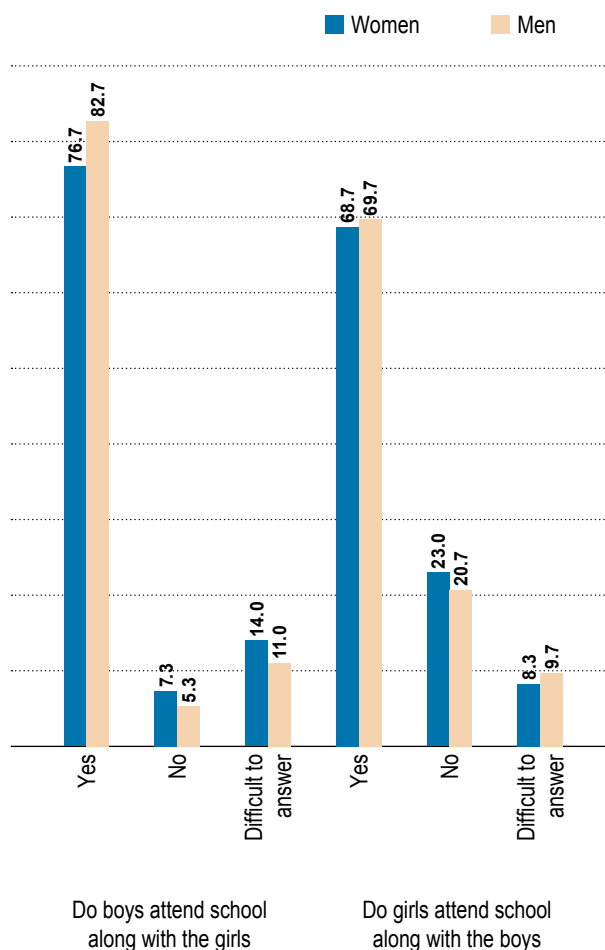
in their own households and rarely, in the community, shrinks. Thus, preconditions exist for the further segregation of girls and young women whose future is limited to domestic work. In Tajikistan, there are cases where school directors and teachers motivated parents by organizing dressmaking courses in order to get girls to attend school. Parents consider these courses more useful from a practical point of view.

Levels of non-attendance have also increased in Kyrgyzstan and the situation is most urgent in rural areas where the majority of children not attending school (79%) live⁵⁰. In both states, the available statistics do not reflect the actual number of missed lessons because most absences are not formally recorded.

As to equal access to education, there are differences between the Tajik and Kyrgyz communities. In Tajikistan, poor families prefer male children to get an education. According to the survey, 60% of girls and 80% of boys in Tajikistan do not attend school (*see Diagram 6*). In rural areas, non-attendance is due to the use of child labour, prohibitions by parents and lack of money. Among respondents in Tajikistan, men (14.6%) have more education than women (11.9%). This applies to secondary-special education as well – 17.2% of men versus 13.6% of women. Thus, girls lead only in secondary education (54.3%).

In Kyrgyzstan, girls lead in secondary and higher education. In spite of difficulties in the transition period, the majority of the population

Diagram 6. Secondary school attendance. Northern Tajikistan (%)



Today, women are extremely smart. If we give them their freedom they will sit on our necks

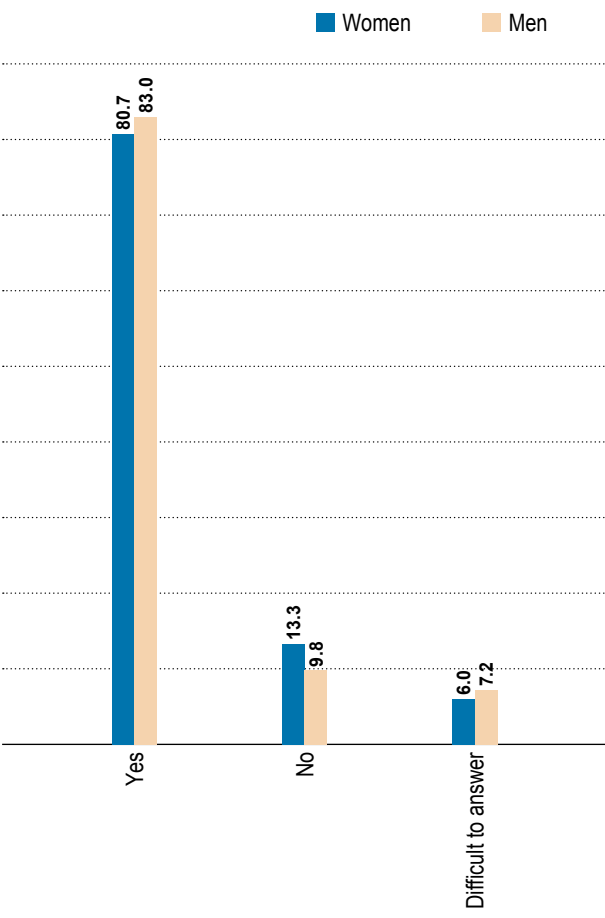
(in depth interview, Tajikistan).

tries to provide their children with both elementary and secondary education – about 95% of children aged 7 to 16 years old attend secondary school⁵¹. Respondents in Kyrgyzstan do not face obvious discrimination by gender

⁵⁰ UN. Kyrgyz Republic: Report on Implementation of the Declaration on Millennium Development Goals. Bishkek, 2003, p.180.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Diagram 7. **Secondary school attendance of girls is on a par with boys**
Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)



in terms of equal access of girls and boys to school education, so, about 81% of women and 83% of men said that girls attended school along with the boys (see *Diagram 7*).

In Kyrgyz families, preference in getting high education is given to girls as it is considered that it promotes the economic independence of women, moreover, a good marriage is expected and they will not inherit anything as it all goes to the sons. Parents have higher expectations of boys as they believe that boys should support their families and earn money.

In spite of certain national differences, it is obvious that differences in access of girls to education is closely linked to high levels of poverty. Today, marriage

is considered as the only way out of poverty. The main problem in entering a higher educational institution is shortage of money to pay the fees according to 72% of women and 70% of men in Kyrgyzstan and 61.7% of men and 59% of women in Tajikistan.

The survey discovered previous gender based orientation of girls and boys in families and society to obtain more *female* and *male* professions. Girls prefer to be teachers, nurses, seamstresses and physicians and the main choices of girls are concentrated on intellectual jobs, which are poorly paid. Seamstresses are in demand. Young men prefer to be lawyers, economists, IT specialists, policemen, physicians and farmers.

It is interesting that in spite of diplomas, which are easy to buy, being devalued, higher education is still prestigious while economists or

Young men can study and many of them work locally because of lack of funds to get education and do whatever they can. Some of them go to work in Russia, others stay at home

(from E-forum, woman, 26–35 years old, Jalalabat, Kyrgyzstan).

The main problem is lack of funds. Fees have to be paid everywhere and higher educational institution teachers are hungry and have hungry children, relatives etc and they milk the students. I will say nothing about medicine. People in the region say, "God save me from having to go to the police and hospital"

(from E-forum, man, 35 years old, Batken, Kyrgyzstan).

Problems of the young generation in accessing medical services and education are linked to corruption in higher and secondary education, poverty, shortage of ways of getting loans and grants for education, lack of part-time jobs and unemployment after graduation

(from E-forum, woman, 35 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

lawyers are unable to find jobs, unlike carpenters, labourers or seamstresses. A higher education diploma is accepted as a mandatory certificate of the social ability of the individual and this, combined with inequalities in educational policy, could have a negative effect in terms of employment among young people in future.

About 60% of respondents in Kyrgyzstan, both men and women, were unable to answer the question on the availability of special investment programmes to support young people. About 43.1% of interviewed women in Tajikistan failed to answer that question. It is not surprising as there are no such programmes in the Ferghana Valley states. Young people have no chance of getting loans to build houses for young families and

students have no chance of finding hourly paid work to offset the cost of their education.

Unemployment

As the survey showed, the most pressing problem among the young people of the region is unemployment. According to the results of the pilot monitoring, almost 77% of those interviewed in Kyrgyzstan listed unemployment as the most urgent problem. Next are poverty (15%) and financial difficulties in getting education (4%) (see Table 1). The three highest priority problems of young men and women in Tajikistan are unemployment (26%), poverty and shortage of land for building houses

Table 1. **The three most urgent problems facing the youth of southern Kyrgyzstan**

	Women (%)	Men (%)
Unemployment	78.7	74.7
Poverty	12.0	18.1
Material constraints in getting education and health care services	6.4	2.3

Table 2. **The three most urgent problems facing the youth of northern Tajikistan**

	Women (%)	Men (%)
Unemployment	25.9	26.2
Poverty	17.7	15.4
Material constraints in getting education and health care services	16.2	13.4

(16% each) and material constraints in getting education and health care services (14.8%) (see Table 2).

There are no reliable statistics on youth and general unemployment. According to official data, the unemployment rate in Kyrgyzstan is 11.2% among women and 14.3% among men, although in reality the unemployment rate is much higher⁵². There is a gender imbalance in economic activity levels and unemployment, so the unemployment rate is higher among women. Unfortunately, there are no accurate official statistics on the age-specific structure of the unemployed.

According to official statistics, during the last five years the unemployment rate in Tajikistan has risen from 1.7% to 3.2%. Only three quarters of the registered unemployed are paid social benefits of 1.5 USD a month. Due to the low level of benefits the majority of unemployed do not register. The actual unemployment rate is about 11.3% – male 12.3% and female – 9%⁵³. The largest proportion of unemployed is young people. For example, according to the data of the Employment Centre of Soghd oblast, the number of registered unemployed is 13,379 including 4,364 women; and young people under 30 – 4,802 i.e. 48% of the total registered people. Rural young people in particular suffer from unemployment – they migrate to urban areas or outside the republic, especially to CIS countries in order to find jobs.

Shortage of money to pay for education, unemployment and lack of opportunities to earn money in the country – all these things were mentioned by the participants of E-forum as the main reason for youth migration to other countries. Often, migration to Russia is considered a lifeline, providing work and the chance to save money to get an education or build a house. Moreover, the outflow of labour migrants to Russia, especially young people, is considered a factor reducing the risk of conflict.

Based on surveys conducted in Tajikistan, the main reasons for migration are unemployment (32.7%) and the unfavourable economic

Now young people have jobs. If they hadn't left then the level of conflict potential would be higher in the Ferghana Valley

(from E-forum, no personal data).

Thanks to Allah and Putin. We will pray that Russia is still tolerant...

(from E-forum, man, 26–35 years old).

As you know there are not many jobs and wages are low. Most young and middle-aged men migrate to Russia and stay there. The women are left with all the worries and household problems. Rural women depend entirely on national traditions and mentality. Women have different reactions... Some commit suicide out of despair. Others beat their children. Some of them go to their parents, others divorce

(in depth interview with one of the heads of a local committee in Tajikistan).

⁵² Gender relations in the Kyrgyz Republic. National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2005, p.55.

⁵³ Belyeva A. Social factor economy development in Tajikistan. Central Asia and Caucasus, 1998, №15. Available online at: http://www.ca-c.org/journal/15-1998/st_02_beljaeva.shtml

situation (30.7%) in the country. According to data of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan, the majority of labour migrants (89.2%) are men⁵⁴. Because many able-bodied men have left their homes, the burden of everyday life falls onto women's shoulders. In some cases, the men do not return for years or do not send remittances, and as result, women and children suffer.

Data on migration are contradictory and often unreliable both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Based on unofficial estimates, the number of migrants from Kyrgyzstan to Russia is about 200–500 thousand (10% of the population), and the number of migrants from Tajikistan to Russia ranges from 5 to 18% of the total population⁵⁵.

As a result of changes in the transition period, young people face the situation where it is difficult to talk about self-fulfillment. The poorest young people have limited access to education and a higher education diploma does not guarantee employment. On leaving their alma mater the young specialists are not able to find jobs quickly and lose their knowledge and skills. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan education has to be paid for and so the young unemployed often have no chance of getting re-trained or additional education. It makes them uncompetitive in the labour market because of their lack of practical experience. Their destiny is low paid or unskilled work. There is little in the way of organized leisure and they are isolated from the traditional social environment because of their unemployment and this leads to increased crime, drug abuse and other unwanted phenomena.

Due to unemployment, young people depend more and more on the elder generation, their parents. In the Ferghana Valley where parents don't have jobs, young people are left without any support. Mass unemployment among them disrupts the continuity in developing labour skills and human resources capacity. If this trend continues the general intellectual and education capacity of the states of the region will fall in the near future.

It is important to say that youth unemployment in the region has not been well studied and that it is necessary to study the structure of youth unemployment in terms of the educational level and gender differences of the unemployed. Special attention should be paid to the shortage of technical-vocational education, the poor quality of education in high schools and their low adaptation to market needs, as these make the problem of youth unemployment worse.

⁵⁴ Olimova S. Migration processes in modern Tajikistan. Demoskop Weekly, №223–224, 2005, 21 November - 4 December. Available online at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0223/analit05.php>

⁵⁵ Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing down barriers: Regional cooperation for Human Development and Human Security. UNDP Bratislava Slovak Republic, 2005, p. 140.

Perception of state policy by young people and their vision of the future

The survey shows a high level of dissatisfaction with state youth policies among the population of the region. 64% of men and almost 50% of women interviewed in Kyrgyzstan consider the state youth policy to be ineffective and only 16% of men and 19% of women think it is effective (see *Diagram 8*). In Tajikistan, about 37% of men and 32% of women view the state youth policy positively and 31% of men and about 23% of women interviewed spoke of an ineffective youth policy (see *Diagram 9*).

Expectations of the respondents that state policy will improve in the near future are also low: 41% of men and 29% of women in Kyrgyzstan do not believe that the government will be able to solve young people’s problems within the next five years; in Tajikistan – 29.5% of men and 21% of women do not believe in the ability of the state to resolve the problems of young people in the short-term.

Diagram 8. How the population rates the effectiveness of the state youth policy. Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

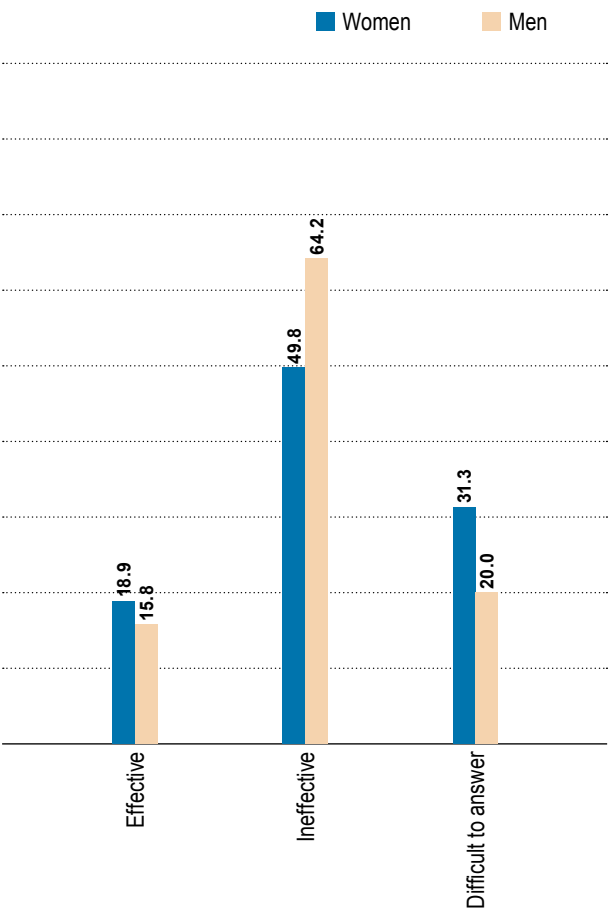
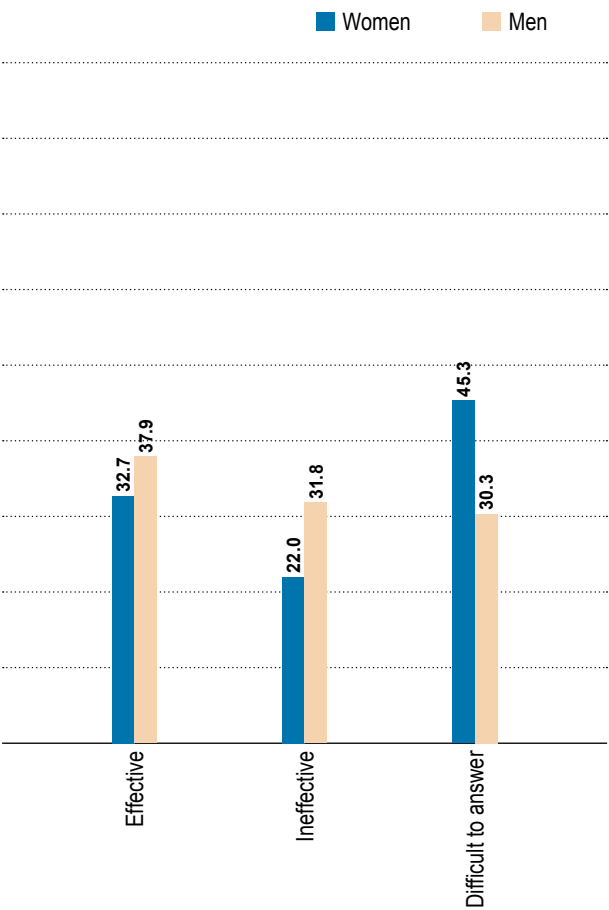


Diagram 9. How the population rates the effectiveness of the state youth policy. Northern Tajikistan (%)



It is interesting that scepticism and distrust are higher among men than women. We can assume that the increased number of young men dissatisfied with the state youth policy could threaten stability, as they are fertile ground for various extremist ideas. Discussions in the E-forum identified the great anxiety of young people concerning

corruption, its size in the country and growing distrust of state structures.

*I am a civil servant and do not see any future in my country. Corruption is the main obstacle in our economy. Young people have no real chance of finding work. No factories or plants are working. Everything has been stolen. How can young people find work? It is possible to get a job working for the state, why? Because it is possible to earn money through taking bribes. Who can find a job there? Only the young people whose parents or relatives work there (i.e. corrupt people or bribe takers) or children of those criminals who are linked to the corrupt people and pay them their share. **We need a real revolution**, where people with clean hands and thoughts will come here....*

(from E-forum, man, 26–35 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

Actually, young people are leaving Kyrgyzstan and they are right. In Bishkek and the other cities and towns of Kyrgyzstan there is nothing left to do

(from E-forum, woman, 18-25 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan).

Your motherland is not chosen, it is beloved. It is bad that many of you, dear contemporaries, think like weak people, like parasites, therefore, young people's problems are like a dead burden. We have to express our political interest, willingness to cooperate with the authorities, to unite and actually love our own nation and country

(from E-forum, woman, 18–25 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

The surveys also showed a high level of passivity of Tajik women with regard to this policy, probably due to the level of education of the respondents: almost 45.3% of women in Tajikistan didn't give an opinion on the effectiveness of the state youth policy.

Nevertheless, in spite of the increased negative attitude to the state policies, there is a certain level of trust by the population of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. 40% of women and 35% of men in Kyrgyzstan and about 52% of interviewed men and women in Tajikistan believe the government can partly solve the problems of young people.

Young people are patriotic and during the E-forum, in spite of the prevalence of apathy and negativism, young people feel optimistic and want believe in the future of their country and are willing to work, study and go into business.

During the E-discussion, young people said that government actions were populist when they declared the need to solve young people's problems without understanding their essence. Young people consider that they need the opportunity to stand for local and national parliaments.

Thus, there is disappointment among the young men and women and separation from the formal ideology and authority of the elder generation in the area and a lack of strong and stable states, economic growth and basic security. If that separation from the state were to lead to the consolidation and mobilization of the younger generation, they could become a positive force. However, there is another threat. Youth movements can be a very destructive force if used and manipulated by the supporters of various violent ideologies. It is interesting to look at the participation of young people in the March 2005 events in Kyrgyzstan. There was greater participation by young people and this led to some analysts pointing out that *adolescents carried out “the Kyrgyz revolution”*. At the same time, opinions were expressed that the manipulation of young people by drug traffickers and various political groups could be a serious threat to society.

Based on material from the discussion forum, it is clear that the youth of the Ferghana Valley have a broad range of opinions on their role and attitude to the state. On the one hand, we see spite, disappointment and a feeling of despair and on the other hand, optimism and patriotism urging young people to ignore parasitical positions and establish different social movements, i.e. to be actively involved in politics.

... main and urgent problem is that the governments in Ferghana oblast do not pay attention to young people's problems and do not know how to use the potential of the young, the future local resources of the Ferghana Valley

(from E-forum, without any personal data).

I suggest that the youth of the Ferghana Valley actively participate in the Students In Free Entrepreneurship – SIFE movement. The young generation should take part in any activity to show and develop their capacity. By going into business young people and the elder generation will be able to earn money and solve their problems

(from E-forum, man, 18–25 years old, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan).

Yes, poverty is poverty everywhere, and it is one of the basic problems in any state. Poverty has a negative impact on the future and young people. Because of poverty, young people do not study. What should they do? Those who live in small towns drink or smoke drugs or turn to crime. The Ferghana is well known for this. We just need to understand young people and ask this government not to ignore them as the last one did. The government is busy with other things: power, redistribution of positions and money laundering. Citizens of Ferghana, please plan your family. Why have 7–9 children when it is difficult to feed even one child. Please change your mentality

(from E-forum, woman, 18–25 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

Ethnic and Religious Factors

Interethnic relations

Traditionally, it has been considered that the multi-ethnicity of the population of the Ferghana Valley presents a constant source of tension and threat of conflict. However, such an opinion is not always sound. Monitoring data shows that the conflicts in the region are provoked not only by interethnic enmity, but also by a group of various factors – economic, social, political and ethnic. As a rule, emphasis on interethnic tensions leads to false statements that incite conflicts.

During monitoring, about 48% of women and 36% of men interviewed in Kyrgyzstan answered that they did not face any racial discrimination (see *Diagram 10*). It is interesting that racial discrimination expressed by representatives of the border and Customs service of the neighbouring state was indicated by almost 31% of interviewed men in Kyrgyzstan and 41.4% in Tajikistan, and 19% of women in Kyrgyzstan and 38% in Tajikistan (see *Diagram 11*).

Diagram 10. **Answers of respondents to the question: from whom do you feel any discrimination related to your nationality?**
Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

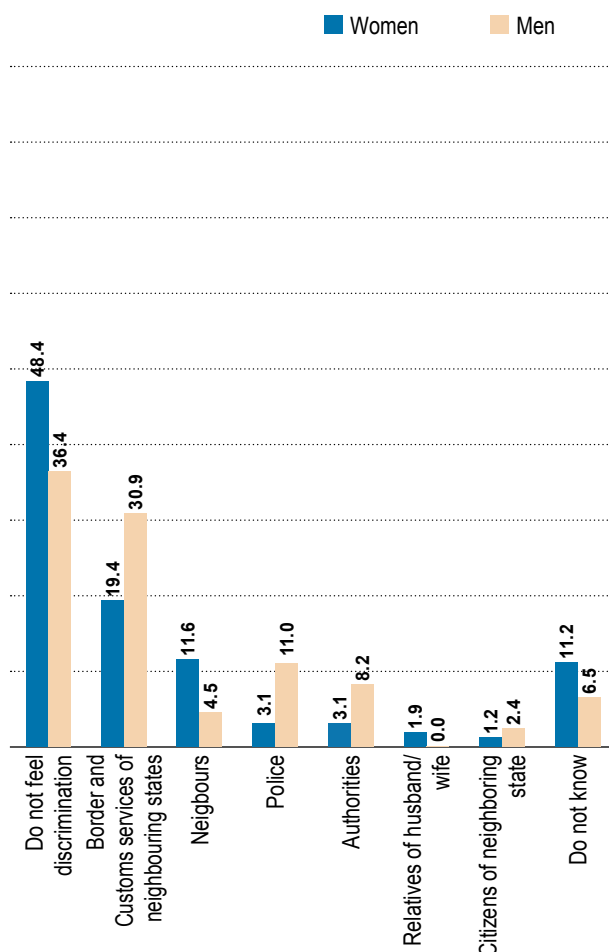
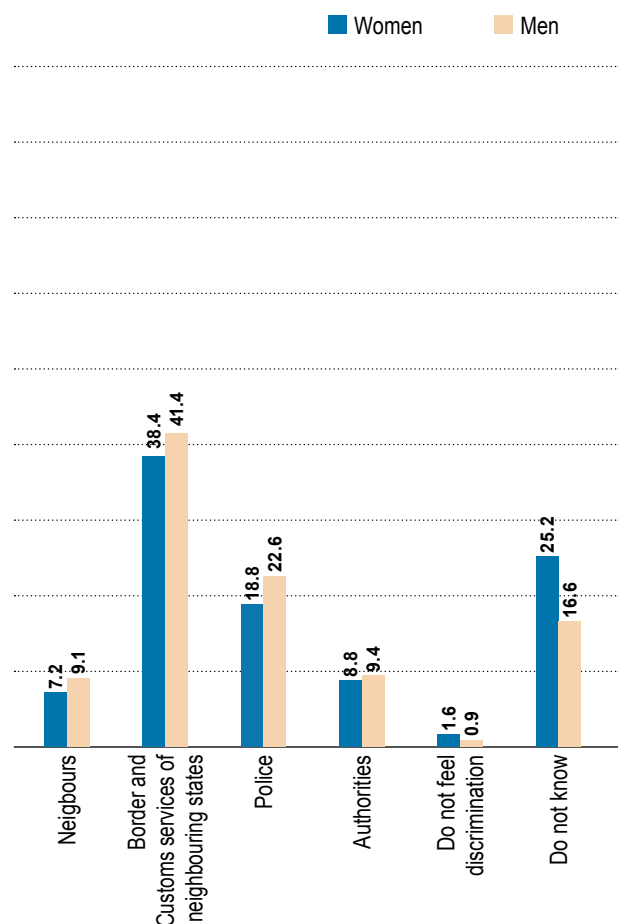


Diagram 11. **Answers of the respondents to the question: from whom do you feel any discrimination related to your nationality?**
Northern Tajikistan (%)



Racial discrimination expressed by policemen and representatives of the authorities was experienced more by men than women, probably, because only women play the role of shuttle traders running additional risks to their health and personal safety when they cross borders.

93% of respondents in Tajikistan said that they were tolerant of and neutral towards representatives of other nationalities (see *Diagram 12*). At the same time, answers of respondents show that they feel more racial discrimination from the border and Customs services of the neighbouring state (40%), police (21%), authorities (9%) and neighbours (8.3%) (see *Diagram 11*).

Setting up border crossings and Customs checkpoints on the borders of the states of the Ferghana Valley significantly affected the freedom of movement enjoyed in the integrated region in the past. Representatives of other nationalities are often subject to discrimination at the customs checkpoints and this adversely affects interethnic relations and worsens tensions in the region. Because of contradictions in the customs legislation, locals are subjected to humiliating procedures at the Customs checkpoints of the neighbouring state. There have been

Diagram 12. **Attitude of respondents to other nationalities, Northern Tajikistan (%)**

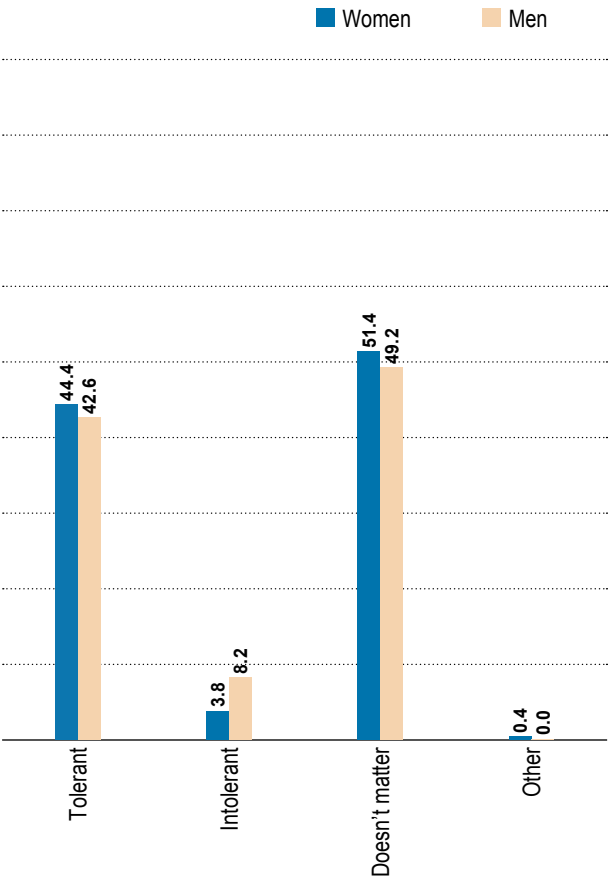
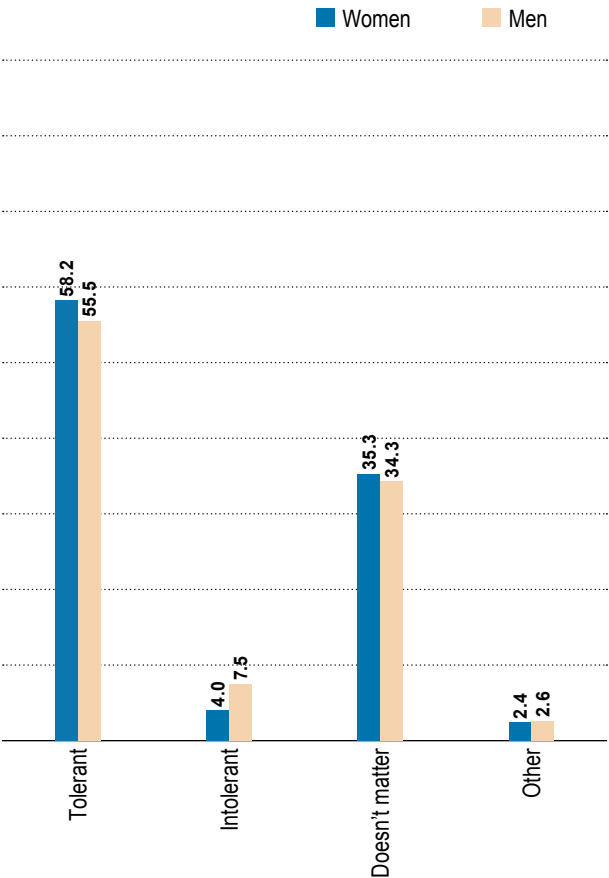


Diagram 13. **Attitude of respondents to other nationalities, Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)**



cases of open extortion by representatives of the law enforcement bodies.

In Kyrgyzstan, 58% of women and 55% of men who replied are tolerant of other nationalities and about 34% of men and women are neutral (see *Diagram 13*). Hence, the interethnic factor only becomes relevant when additional factors become detonators. In spite of the fact that the majority of the population of the region is tolerant of other nationalities, national aspects “reveal themselves” at border crossings and there are violations by the Customs and border services of the neighbouring state. Similarly, faced with difficulties in selling goods in the neighbouring state, the anger of the people is immediately shifted to the neighbouring state and associated with the citizens of that state.

Religious relations

According to the results of the monitoring, the religious factor in terms of conflict potential is more significant than the ethnic factor. In Kyrgyzstan, whereas about 6% of respondents were intolerant of other nationalities, about 42% were intolerant of those who had switched to another religion (see *Diagram 14*). In Tajikistan, the survey showed

Diagram 14. Attitude to people who have changed their religion, Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

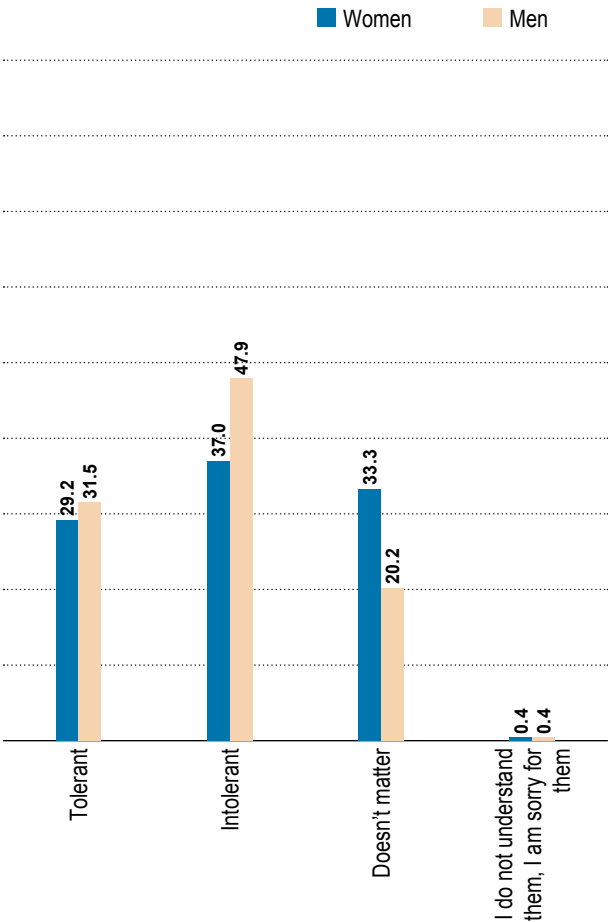
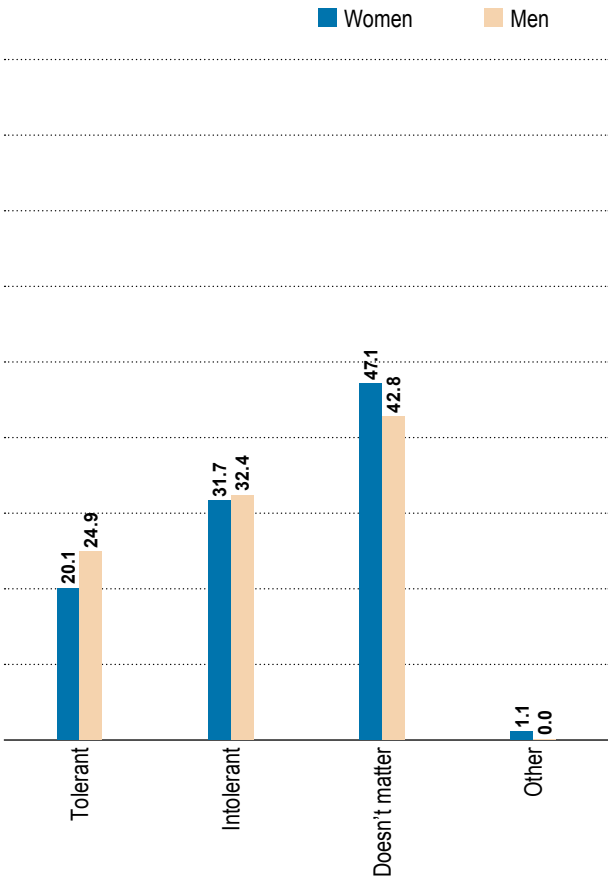


Diagram 15. Attitude to people who have changed their religion, Northern Tajikistan (%)



that intolerance towards people who had changed their religion was expressed by both men (32.4%) and women (31.7%) (see *Diagram 15*).

These figures force people to think that in the future religious tensions could be an additional complicated layer of problems between “*newcomers to religion*” and those who believe in “*traditional*” religion. It is necessary to study who and why they have changed their beliefs in terms of gender and what are the consequences of converting to another religion for men and women and its influence on the family and its relations with the community.

It is known that there has been a trend towards “*Christianising*” the local population, in particular, young people in the Ferghana Valley in recent years. Foreign missionaries in the valley distribute the Bible and other literature in the local languages, trying to attract new followers. Tension occurs because the local population has traditionally been considered to be Muslims and they see other people who have changed their beliefs as apostates and threaten them. There have been some cases where young people have been cast out of the family because of their belief, and they have become social outcasts. In some cases, local communities have prohibited burial in the cemetery of those who have converted to another religion.

After gaining independence, different foreign missionaries have visited the states of the Ferghana Valley, and thousands of locals have converted to other religions. People forsaking Islam was a reason that the government of Tajikistan prohibited the activity of three religious sects – *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, *Alliance of Baptists-Evangelicals* and *the Sonmin Sunbogym Korean Church*. Besides these organizations, other “*new*” religions have started mission activity in the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe and in Soghd oblast, including *the Seventh-Day Adventists*, *Hari Krishnas* and *Baptists*.

The policy of Kyrgyzstan in relation to the missionaries is very liberal. Many unregistered missions are active in the Kyrgyz Republic along with the formally registered ones. At present, eight protestant churches are active in Jalalabat oblast; only three of them are registered. The Church of Jesus Christ has the least number of people⁵⁶. There are also other “*new*” religious sects.

Religious organizations are actively engaged in charitable activities and the often support the construction of hospitals, medical and educational facilities, and regularly hold cultural and sporting events for young people. It is assumed that in a country where the majority of people live below the poverty line, the representatives of non-traditional religions convert the local population to their own religion by giving material assistance. The main target audiences of the missions are young people, homeless children and socially vulnerable women. People who have converted from Islam to Christianity have noticed that in the new religion they have been made to feel welcome and given

⁵⁶ Early Warning Report. Preventive Development Program. UNDP – Kyrgyzstan, 2004, p. 25.

help. In recent years, a trend of converting to other religions has been observed among Tajik women.

It is important to mention that a significant number of interviewed respondents in Kyrgyzstan (53%) both men and women, consider that young people converting to other religions could be grounds for conflict (see *Diagram 16*), while the figures for a similar answer in Tajikistan were 37.2% for men and 34.4% for women (see *Diagram 17*). The reasonably high proportion of intolerance to those who have converted to another religion could be transformed into a deeper schism in communities and growing enmity based on religious belief. In both republics, the number of men intolerant of those who have changed religion was higher than that of women. Most women are neutral towards those who have converted to another belief.

The differences between the answers of the respondents in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the subject of further analysis and study. In Kyrgyzstan, the average percentage of respondents indicating the probability of conflicts because of local young people converting to other religions, and intolerance of those who have changed their religion, was higher than in Tajikistan. It would be logical to expect that

Diagram 16. Possibility of violent conflict because of converting to another religion Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

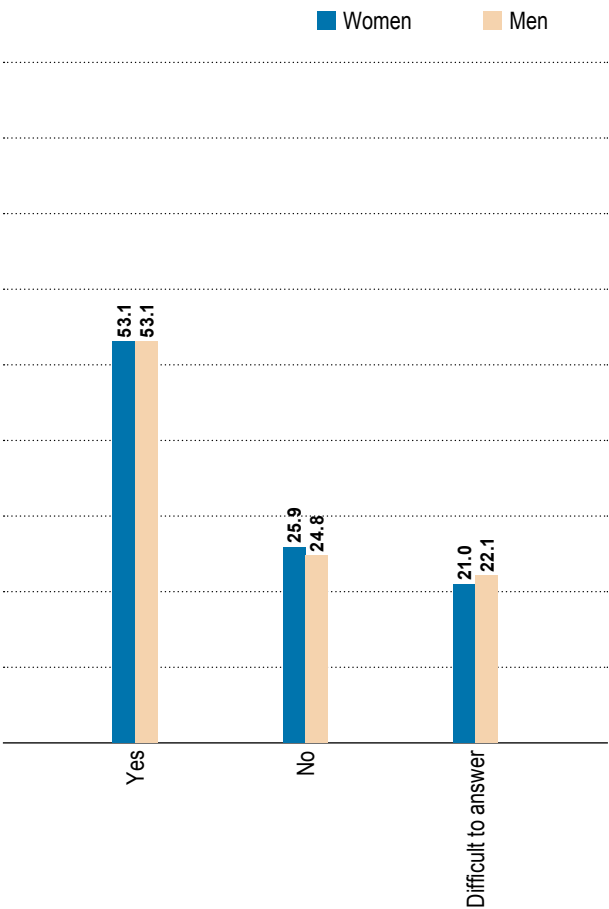
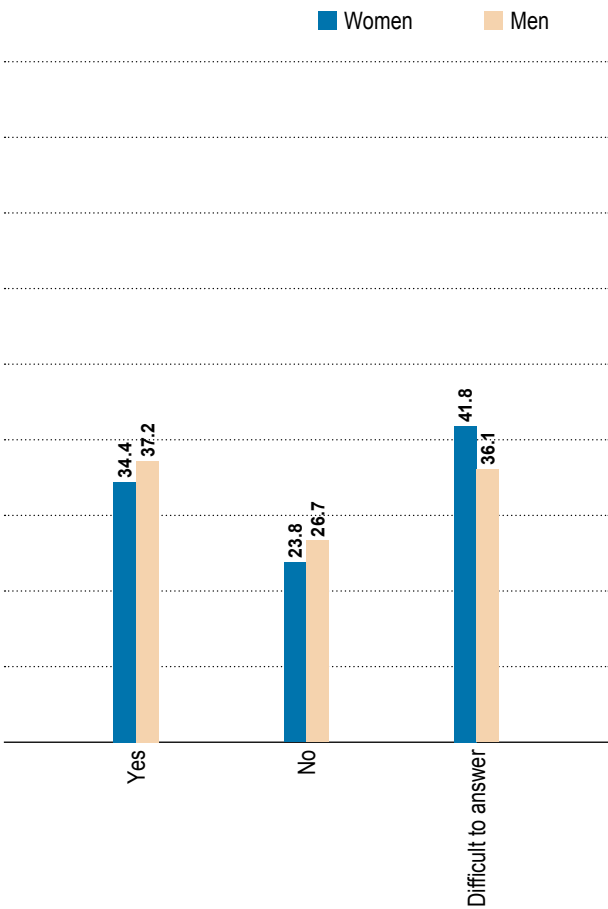


Diagram 17. Possibility of violent conflict because of converting to another religion Northern Tajikistan (%)



the level of intolerance of those who had converted to other religions would be higher among the Tajiks as they are stronger Muslims; however, the survey did not support such an assumption.

One explanation is that the missionaries feel freer in Kyrgyzstan, and the number of converts to non-traditional religions is higher than in neighbouring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. So, the specialist of the State Agency on religion under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic reported that missionaries from 54 countries are present in the country and about 30 various missions are active here⁵⁷.

Given almost universal unemployment and the lack of an effective state youth policy, there is a threat that all the elements of social life including education could be replaced in the region. Many communities in the region do not have sports clubs, cinemas, theatres, discos or cafés for young people. Many students know nothing about computers, the Internet or E-mail.

About half of the interviewed respondents from Kyrgyzstan (about 46%) mentioned that young men initially join radical religious groups for socio-economic reasons and then religious ideals (29%). Social and economic constraints (38%) and religious beliefs (22%) prevail in women's answers (see Table 3).

In Tajikistan, 43% of interviewees consider that men join radical religious groups because of socio-economic constraints, political (14%) or religious (16%) beliefs. An unexpected result was the opinion of respondents concerning the reasons for women joining extremist groups. About 60% of respondents mentioned that women join radical groups because of their political beliefs. Only after this do we see religion (12%) and socio-economic difficulties (11%) (see Table 4).

It is interesting to study the motivation of young women for joining radical religious groups. Based on data received from the Tajik monitors, during recent years the religious movement Hizb-ut-Tahrir has concentrated

If the foundations for economic development and poverty prevention are not established young people will turn to extremism as the only way to resist socio-economic unfairness

(from E-forum, woman, 26–35 years old).

Unfortunately, high unemployment, poverty and social problems push young people into joining various groups (Hizb-ut-Tahrir etc.) and radical Islamists. The state does not pay much attention to solving young people's problems and only international agencies and NGOs try to help our young people somehow. They can support us temporarily and then... And then we can say they join groups and are taken notice of and receive money

(from E-forum, women of 26–35 years old, Batken oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

"I would like to join the Hisbut-Tahrir party, but everywhere former and present staff of the Ministry of National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan have enrolled. Maybe somebody can tell me where I can join the "real" party. Leave your comments here"

(from E-forum, man, 26–35 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

⁵⁷ Shadrova N. Capacity for inter-religious tolerance in Kyrgyzstan. – Institute for Regional Studies. – Information bulletin "Orientiry i Practica", № 4 (45), November 23, 2005.

Table 3. **Reasons for joining radical religious groups by young men and women of Southern Kyrgyzstan**

	Young men join radical religious groups		Young women join radical religious groups	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Because of socio-economic constraints	41.5	49.7	36.3	39.1
Political beliefs	1.9	4.7	2.1	0.7
Religion	31.4	26.3	22.6	23.1
Forced by family members: wife, sister, brother...	7.5	7.0	15.8	18.1
Because of illiteracy, low level of education	0.6	2.9	0.7	1.4
Other	0.6	1.2	1.4	1.4
Difficult to answer	16.4	8.2	21.2	15.9

Table 4. **Reasons for joining radical religious groups by the young men and women of Northern Tajikistan**

	Young men join radical religious groups		Young women join radical religious groups	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Because of socio-economic constraints	37.1	48.1	12.1	10.1
Political beliefs	15.7	12.7	54.8	65.7
Religion	11.4	20.3	13.6	11.0
Forced by family members: wife, sister, brother...	2.9	5.1	3.0	4.8
Difficult to answer	32.9	13.9	16.6	8.6

on enlisting women into their organization; special training centres have been established abroad for ideological training. The idea of the party ideologists was that after training the young girls come back to their native land and promote the ideals of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, i.e. will set up Islamic families and change public attitudes.

In general, young people are more deeply interested in Islam: 33.4% of respondents indicated that men express their interest in Islam by performing religious and traditional ceremonies and attending mosques. Young people's participation in Friday and regular prayers has also increased.

A similar trend – interest in Islam – is also noticeable among young women. 43% of women and 49% of men pointed out that young women express their interest in Islam by performing traditional ceremonies. As with the men, there is a trend towards a deeper interest in Islam through prayer, studying in madrassahs and participating in informal women's groups studying Islam. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, numbers

of girls collectively read the Koran in informal groups under the supervision of “*bu-otynchi*” – elderly religious supervisors. These groups give young people a feeling of education or awareness.

Based on the E-forum discussion, it is clear that some young people associate Islam with radicalism and terrorism. Often, the opinion is expressed about needing to increase the awareness of young people about Islam explaining that they would not be involved in any extremist groups if they knew more about Islam. Thus, the difference between “*right*” and “*distorted*” Islam is made.

It is interesting to note that the supporters of so-called enlightened Islam often use the canons of traditional Islam in considering domestic violence and gender relations. Islam, like any other religion, prohibits violence against women, and only atheists (non-believers) can do such things. In the opinion of enlightened Muslims, questions of property rights according to Islam also establish fair grounds for gender equality. Poor knowledge by women of their rights leads to violation of property rights to land and other property on divorce.

Therefore, it is interesting to note the opinion of women regarding the influence of religion in their life. There is an opinion among women that Islam in its interpretation by imams and men does not meet the interests of women, and is aimed at lowering their status in society. Probably, it is one of the reasons why young women are turning to other religions.

On the one hand, the participants of the E-forum urge the use of “enlightened” Islam as a tool of gender policy. For example, it was proposed to cultivate respect for women and public contempt for men using physical violence against women through religion. Positive motives are seen in attempts to integrate religion into education and young people’s awareness, however on the other hand their approaches need to be considered carefully. For example, the

Recently at a meeting I wrote down the words of one participant. It was a statement from one of the khadises of the prophet Mohamed: “A man who recognizes the greatness of a woman and respects her is noble, and he who tortures and humiliates her is damned”

(from E-forum, woman, 36–45 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

The impact of both the traditional and other branches of Islam are weaker at present. Islam became weaker long time ago due to illiterate imams in the villages who were not able to resist ordinary Khizbutovets. I mean Batken oblast where people still consider themselves as very Islamised and god-fearing because of their naivety. About 80% of imams and mullahs in the republic come from Batken oblast. It is necessary to licence them with the muftiyat otherwise the illiterate and underground propaganda of traditional Islam will be the more dangerous and unpredictable one

(from the E-Forum discussion, Batken oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

....Everyone has his/her own belief, but everyone should believe properly; therefore there is a time when the fundamentalism of Islam should be linked with modern science and only then can Islam itself choose the right direction

(from E-Forum, man, 18–25 years old, Kyrgyzstan).

A prejudiced attitude to the authorities is one of the numerous reasons why the young people of the region are affected by various extremist and radical branches of Islam ... Probably, we have to follow the practice of those native residents of the Ferghana Valley who have converted to Christianity – there are no polemics, because Christian priests explain the pillars of their religion without any tension. Of course, I am not talking about sects within Christianity

(from E-Forum, man of 26–35 years old, Batken oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

It seems to me that Islam has more impact on young people. Our men take from Islam what they need and are violent towards women. It has become normal that a man has a second wife and the clergy supports them and within five minutes registers the marriage. But that moldo⁵⁷ never says to the husband that in Islam in order to have a second wife he should meet a number of conditions. Firstly, it is by agreement with the first wife, secondly, equal, fair moral and material provision for all wives and children and other requirements

(from E-forum, woman, 36–45 years old, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan).

The role of Islam has increased and it is impossible to reverse the trend in the short-term. The conservative influence of those visions is felt and they do not meet the spirit of Eurasians

(from E-forum, man, 26–35 years old, country not known).

difference made between “*our*” religion and “*our Islam flow*” and “*another*” type of Islam indirectly demonstrates the capacity to contraposition “*our*” and “*another*”, generating preconditions for stronger intolerance.

⁵⁸ Moldo – Imam.

Summing up the section:

- The Ferghana Valley is not only overpopulated but has a large element of young people (40% – 50%) in the population. Considering that the region is facing social, economic and political problems that have remained unsolved for many years, a major proportion of the young people pose a serious risk of destabilizing the region.
- Poverty and the destruction of the social and cultural infrastructure have led to increased inequality in access to education and social services. More and more cases of girls not attending school after completing 8th grade can be seen, particularly in Tajikistan. The number of those not attending school is increasing in Kyrgyzstan, and many young boys work and often lose the opportunity to get a higher education.
- Higher education has to be paid for and therefore it is a heavy burden for many poor families. There are no special investment programmes either in Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan. Also, there is no loan programme for young people to get an education or build houses.
- Respondents indicated youth unemployment, as the most urgent problem. Combined with limited access to education, poverty and unemployment lead to marginalization of young people. Unemployment and poverty are the main reasons for youth migration to other states and labour migration of young people to Russia or other countries is considered to be a factor reducing tension in the region.
- The monitoring revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the state youth policy and low expectations that the policy would improve in the short-term. Gender differences are shown in the following: scepticism and distrust in relation to the state youth policy is higher among men than women. There is an especially high level of distrust in state bodies with regard to solving youth problems in Kyrgyzstan where 50% of female and 64% of male respondents consider the state youth policy to be ineffective, as opposed to 31% of interviewed men and 23% of women in Tajikistan.
- According to the survey, the question of interethnic relations and discrimination based on ethnicity is still relevant. Racial discrimination is mostly mentioned in referring to the behaviour of the border and Customs services of neighbouring states; men are more exposed to racial discrimination than women.

- The religious risk factor, in general, is becoming more important. The level of intolerance of those who have converted to another religion is quite high in both states. In Kyrgyzstan, 42% of respondents indicated intolerance of those who had converted to another religion; In Tajikistan the percentages were – 32.4% of men and 31.7% of women. More than half of the interviewed men and women in Kyrgyzstan consider that relations between supporters of traditional religions and those who have converted to other religions could be a reason for conflict in future; and in Tajikistan – 37% of men and 34% of women. It is interesting that in Kyrgyzstan the proportion of those who see potential sources of conflict in converting to other religions is higher than in Tajikistan.
- In future, religious tensions may arise because of converting to non-traditional religions. It could create a complicated layer of problems between the “newcomers” and those who believe in the “traditional” religion. It is necessary to study, from a gender point of view, who is converting to other religions and why and what are the consequences of changing religions for men and women and the influence on the family and its interrelation with the community.
- Interest in religion among girls as well as boys is increasing. Young women often meet together in informal groups to learn Islam under the supervision of “bu-otynchi” – elderly religious supervisors. Young men are learning about Islam in madrassahs and discussions in the mosques. Thus, young people are, on the one hand, trying to replace traditional institutions of socialization by communicating in informal religious groups, and on the other hand, trying to get more knowledge that is missing in schools, higher educational institutions and communication within families.
- Analysis of the E-forum showed that young people do not accept the negative associations of Islam with radicalism and extremism expressed by the authorities and the international community. It is also clear that girls and young women perceive interpreting Islam as being aimed at lowering the status of women compared to men or tendentious interpretations restricting private and economic rights of women. In general, both men and women expressed their dissatisfaction with the educational level of the Muslim clergy; the authority of imams is doubted – it is one of the reasons why young people are turning to various alternative religions including Christianity.

- Social and economic problems, lack of trust in the state, separation from the state ideology, lack of opportunities for self-fulfillment and education can lead to the threat of young people getting involved in radical and extremist groups. Lessening trust in government institutions is a threat since it could force young people to look for alternative forms of society in contrast to a weak and unstable state. It could be used by radical groups advocating establishing an Islamic caliphate. Discussions on the E-forum and results of the monitoring show that one of the main reasons why young women and men join radical groups is the “search for a fair society”.

6. PROBLEMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE IN THE REGION. THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN CONFLICTS

Gender violence: the ambiguous role and position of women

Why are we always surprised at the high level of trafficking in women and young people (in the Ferghana Valley)? Because they grew up in an environment of slavery: they worked as slaves for their parents; the state made them cotton pickers and they became slaves of well-respected presidents Rakhmonov, Akaev, Karimov...

(from E-forum, personal data is not mentioned).

The majority of women face violence from their husbands, sons, families of husbands, own families, male colleagues, every hour. It is accepted as the norm; no one doubts this, including women

(from E-forum, woman, 25–36 years old, Kyrgyzstan).

Extracts from the E-forum entitled *Problems and perspectives of young people in the Ferghana Valley* opening this section, show the problems of gender violence in the region.

Firstly, the presented opinions clearly show the role of the existing generational hierarchies at family level and the role of state and political institutions as key factors defining the nature and scale of violence in the region, including the gender one. Actually, the negative, violent capacity for spreading traditions of subordination in the region, where the value of young people is determined by the possibility of using them for economic or domestic needs when

social institutions – schools, public and professional associations, are weak, can lead to conflict. In its turn, the state recognizes its responsibility for the current situation. It is known that in Soviet times exploiting female and child labour guaranteed the harvest of cotton and tobacco, the main agricultural crops in the region.

Secondly, the opinions of the participants of the E-forum reflect the important fact that the established and developed practice and cycles of violence at structural level form the “naturalness” of the situation, which is accepted by women as the norm and the rule.

The most obvious direct forms of violence against women can be seen in family relations where forced marriage is a common phenomena – bride kidnapping is common in Kyrgyzstan and arranged marriages are common in Tajikistan.

Older women play an important role, especially the bridegroom's mother, i.e. mother-in-law in forced marriages, when the parents agree or in the case of bride kidnapping. Then the father-in-law, mother-in-law and husband are the main objects of power and control in a woman's life – the private, family sphere and relations in the community are determined to a certain extent by the requirement for a married woman to live in the husband's family.

The combination of many roles in the family forms a specific type of women's household leadership, which is based on responsibility for the household as well as internal community responsibilities undertaken by elder women through arranged marriages. Maintaining tribal connections and relations is one of a woman's functions and running the household often leads to the risk of violence not only for young women, but men too.

Forced marriage is directly linked with cases of early marriage in the region. Early marriages limit young women and girls' access to education. Other regional studies have drawn attention to these trends. For example, sources in Tajikistan indicate that more and more girls are leaving school after the eighth form. This situation, in experts' opinion, is determined by three main reasons – poverty, priority of family expenditures and specifics of gender socialization and these reasons are closely connected to the spread in the region of a conservative interpretation of religion. So, one of the sources says: *“Religion continues to be very influential in private, family and community life: it indulges men's control of women's social lives, domestic chores, birth, and forced marriage, violence and/or disinheritance of women”*⁵⁹.

At the same time, the role of religious education for women has increased and they meet mainly in informal groups in communities or makhallya (neighbourhoods) where the elder women again play the key role of conductors of religious ideas – they were previously mentioned as *“bu-otynchi”* (religious supervisor).

Moral and physical violence in families leads to tragic results. It is no secret that many women go to hospital when pregnant just to get away and get some rest from the husband's relatives and sleep well

(from E-forum, woman, 18–25 years old, Kyrgyzstan).

Religious leaders use their power to take many wives. For example, a 75-year old mufti had seven wives including a 17-year old girl

(from an interview with a woman, 51 years old, Chorku village, Tajikistan).

...Nothing can help if men have for centuries beaten their wives, especially oriental men. In the Ferghana it is normal: a woman wakes up at 4 a.m., works hard and goes to sleep late at night. Every year she gives birth to another child. There are cases where a wife has been beaten to death and all her neighbours condemn her and say that she was foolish and not a human being. If a husband kills his wife it means that she was bad. Violence is the worst thing that can happen in a family. A son sees how his father beats his mother and will follow his example. The family is a holy thing. If there is conflict in the family it means that society is bad and undeveloped. Violence exists not only in the Ferghana but over the world

(from E-forum, woman, 18–25 years old, Kyrgyzstan).

⁵⁹ Human Development in Central Asia Report. UNDP Regional Bureau on European and CIS countries. 2005, p. 181.

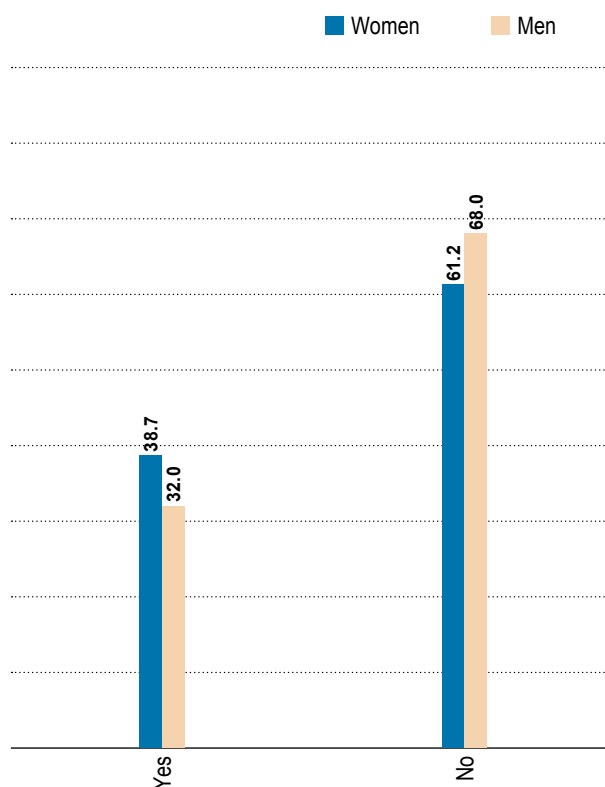
Gender violence is not limited to family relationships. As mentioned above, female shuttle traders daily cross borders and are exposed to the risk of violence. Respondents said that the main violators of women are not only their husbands but also the Customs and border officers and bazarkoms⁶⁰. The answers of respondents to the question: “*Do you know of cases of violence whilst transporting agricultural produce?*” showed that border crossings are linked to the risk of sexual abuse and rape for women as well as problems such as extortion and intimidation by the law enforcement bodies, which are also met by men (See Diagrams 18 and 19).

The opinion exists that women and children can easily cross the border as they attract less attention from the law enforcement structures. Respondents used this fact to explain the larger proportion of women, including pensioners and children, selling goods in border markets.

At the same time, the commonly used stereotype that “*women arouse less suspicion*” makes women more vulnerable in terms of their involvement in smuggling, particularly drug smuggling and drug trafficking⁶¹. Women used to do this for less payment than men. Another concern is that girls are more involved in these illegal types of business. So, one of the commonly used techniques of female drug couriers crossing borders is that they pretend to be *mother and daughter*.

The involvement of women in drug trafficking is also connected with another growing type of violence in the region, that of human trafficking⁶². A specific feature of the trafficking in the region is the close link with flows of illegal labour migration mainly of women and

Diagram 18. Level of women suffering violence during the transportation of agricultural and livestock products. Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)



⁶⁰ Bazarkom – Market administrator.

⁶¹ In Kyrgyzstan during the last five years the number of women arrested as drug carriers has increased several fold. Madi M. Central Asian Survey. Vol. 23 (3–4), 2004, December.

⁶² See also Human Development in Central Asia Report. UNDP Regional Bureau for European and CIS countries. 2005, p. 183.

Diagram 19. **Women are exposed to violence by....**
Responses of women and men of Southern Kyrgyzstan (%)

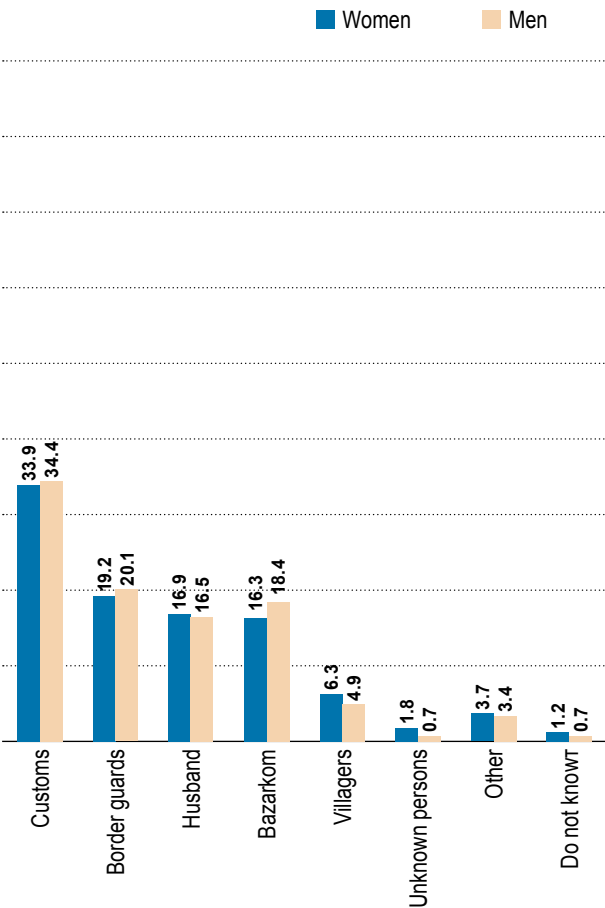
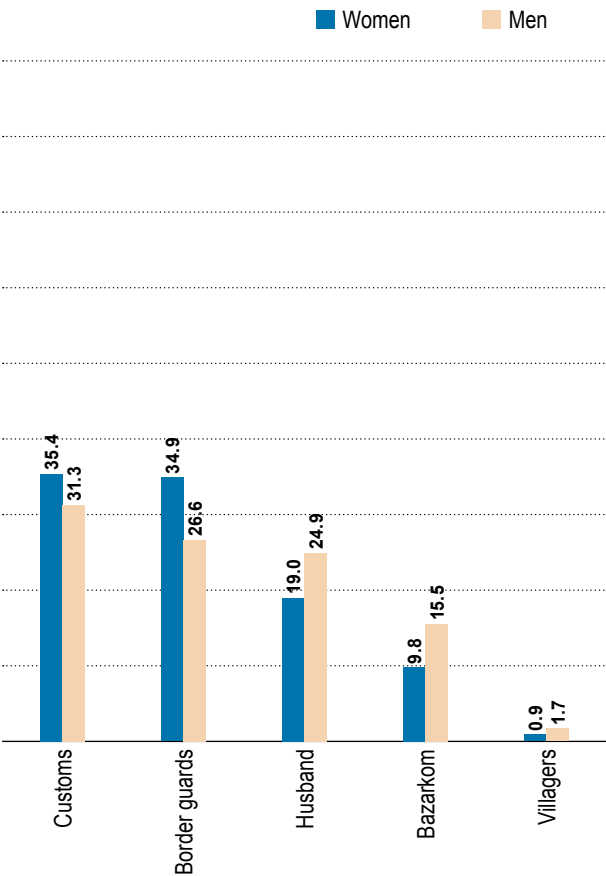


Diagram 20. **Women are exposed to violence by....**
Responses of men and women of Northern Tajikistan (%)



children, for example, from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan, and internal migration from rural areas to the cities. Widespread forms of trafficking are selling people for labour and sexual exploitation.

Among factors determining the scales of trafficking for sexual exploitation within the region, besides the threat of poverty, lack of jobs and increasing crime, are that regional markets for commercial sex have developed, concentrated around the well known trading markets of the valley, such as Kara-Suu, Osh and Uzgen.

Sexual exploitation and the involvement of women in drug smuggling have accelerated the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. The most dynamic incidence of HIV infection has been noticed in Uzbekistan due to the increased use of injected drugs and commercial sex⁶³. The UNAIDS report, Development of the AIDS Epidemic pointed out that the spread of HIV/AIDS in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had not been so dramatic⁶⁴.

⁶³ Development of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic UNAIDS, WHO, 2005 December p. 54.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 55.

Visiting a self-organized labour exchange on the border with Kyrgyzstan, the girls wear nice clothes. Officially they are considered to be looking for work but in reality they sell their bodies...

(from monitor's information, Tajikistan).

There is concern that the AIDS epidemic, initially localized among injecting drug users, is currently widely spread among commercial sex workers and their clients⁶⁵, and people working in the informal sphere of the economy, most of whom are women⁶⁶.

Women and men's participation in conflicts: roles, interests and consequences

Conflicts arising in the region are mainly seasonal in nature and in most cases have a fixed localized area – enclaves, disputed territories and border and Customs checkpoints. Violations by local people and representatives of state structures are grounds for conflicts. For example:

- Vague rules on water distribution, interruptions to the water use schedule for irrigation purposes and water pumps breaking down;
- Self-acquisition of land parcels, violation of rules related to land leasing, use of pastures and rustling;
- Violation of the rules regarding buying and selling houses (Kyrgyz citizens often sell their houses to Tajik citizens based on oral agreements);
- Illegal logging in border areas;
- Competition for jobs between the local population and illegal labour migrants within the region;
- Death of livestock and people on mine-strewn areas along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek and Tajik-Uzbek borders;
- Groundless inspections and extortion of bribes at border checkpoints;

⁶⁵ According to UNAIDS, due to physiological characteristics, young women aged 15–24 are three times more likely to be HIV infected through one-off unprotected sexual contact with an HIV infected partner than young men of similar age.

⁶⁶ Development of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic UNAIDS, WHO, 2005 December p. 49.

- Groundless and sudden closure of borders and the installation of additional border checkpoints;
- Missionary activity of non-Islamic religions;
- Competition between clans for influence (especially demonstrated during the election campaigns of 2004–2005 in Kyrgyzstan).

The shortage of water and land make conflicts very specific in the region. About 62% of interviewed women and 67% of interviewed men in Kyrgyzstan think that disputes and conflicts over resources could result in violent conflict; men believe this more than women.

A World Bank Report of 2004 says that a study of the results of 66 local conflicts in border areas in the five states of Central Asia shows that about half of all border conflicts take place because of the use of common water and land resources and the necessity to cross the border by ordinary residents and traders⁶⁷. In most cases, the population of the border areas came to the conclusion in their conflict assessments that local and national authorities did not pay any attention to the complaints of ordinary people⁶⁸.

The above-mentioned examples show that often the ineffective management of the border areas provokes conflicts. In all conflicts with an interethnic and inter-religious slant, the state, in the person of its representatives, took action that either ignored or provoked confrontation. It is obvious that sources of social tension should be looked for in the interaction between the state and the people where governments make the majority of the population discontented and contribute to destabilizing the situation in the region.

The question of women's role in conflicts is one of the most interesting and contradictory. Prevailing stereotypes in relation to women, as a rule, show them as victims. Actually, it is not unambiguous. The results of the survey conducted during the monitoring show that female respondents and male

You see, local people accept such treatment. Even when soldiers are rough we try to be patient and respond in a peaceful way, as we are powerless in such situations... The soldiers are always right... If adults are here in this situation they say to the young "Don't argue. These soldiers represent the state authorities. Please do what they want"

(woman, 43 years old, focus-group "Access to resources, Jamoat Farmonkurgan, Tajikistan).

There is probably discontent but it is not clearly visible between Kyrgyz and Tajiks. People understand that (violence by Customs and border officers) there are just a few cases among the law enforcement bodies. There is no impact on relations between the two nations

(man, 58 years old, Jamoat Kistakuz, Tajikistan).

Every time the Uzbek border guards do something against the Kyrgyz a few days later our side does something similar in response

(man, 50 years old, focus-group: Access to resources" Suzak rayon, Kyrgyzstan).

⁶⁷ Human Development in Central Asia report. UNDP Regional Bureau for European and CIS countries. 2005, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

In May 2005, Kyrgyz border guards wounded three residents of a Tajik border village and later one of them died. Residents of the Tajik makhalla, who had heard about the death – the old, young, women and children went to the scene shouting, “kill them!” They took three border guards hostage and kept them for 5 hours. The women were afraid that there would be another murder and released them. The women managed to prevent a conflict, but many of the residents of the Tajik village thought that the women had ‘defended’ the other side

(from monitor’s information, Tajikistan).

In autumn 2005, Kyrgyz border guards beat up four boys grazing their livestock on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. The mothers of the boys were angry, however they did not say anything. When they were asked why they did not complain to the authorities, they said that men should do that

(from monitor’s information, Tajikistan).

In principle, women’s participation in negotiations is the exception. However, reality shows that the structure of public order in decision-making and participation in political processes is changing. The role and status of women in society are increasing

(man, 29 years old, focus-group “Access to resources”, Isfana, Kyrgyzstan).

respondents ranked “women’s roles” firstly as *an observer*, then *organizer/direct participant, intermediary, victim and human shield*⁶⁹.

The list showed that “women’s” roles during conflicts determined by both men and women are within the traditional perceptions that consider women to be observers. However, recognizing that women can be organizers or direct participants in conflicts should prove that changes are happening public perceptions – from a passive to active role. The role of victim is not considered as a main “women’s” role.

One of the subjects studied during the monitoring was the question of the role of young people in initiating and resolving conflicts in communities. 37% of respondents in Kyrgyzstan think that both men and women of different ages are active initiators of conflicts in communities. Next are young men and then men of mature age. In Tajikistan, based on survey data, young men are considered as the category most likely to initiate a conflict (39%). Men and women of mature age are less involved in initiating conflicts; this category of men actively participates in conflict resolution (42%).

Questions about the role of young men and women in initiating conflicts need more detailed study. A study of border incidents provided by monitoring specialists and conflicts in local communities regarding pastures, water and other resources, has identified a trend of using young men as a force to frighten the enemy. Young people often play the role of defenders of the honour of representatives of their ethnic group.

Attempts to identify differences in the impact of conflicts on men and women showed that in Kyrgyzstan almost 71% of respondents do not see any difference and male respondents are more confident of the lack of difference of the impact of conflict on the lives of men and women than women are. In general, almost 64% of respondents could not give any reasons why the impact of conflicts on men and women

⁶⁹ This term was widely used by the protest movement during the election campaign in 2005 in Kyrgyzstan when groups of women were in the front lines of protestors.

should be different; women were not confident when answering this question. It demonstrates a low awareness of gender aspects of the impact of conflicts on the population both among women and men. To get the full picture this question needs to be studied more deeply.

In conflicts men often use women for special purposes and send them to settle problems, explaining that, *“they would not be beaten up”*. On the surface, women seem to be active participants in conflict resolution and actually they become the objects of various manipulations.

Often, women from poor families openly express their discontent. Respondents said that men from such families are more likely to be detained by the law enforcement bodies and the high levels of corruption place an additional burden on the family (bribes to release the men).

It has been mentioned that in Kyrgyzstan in the course of the political events of 2005, women, especially in southern areas of the country, became more active. Actually, a specific feature of the protest movement in Kyrgyzstan (meetings, demonstrations, initiatives on land and other property self-acquisition) against the regime of the previous president, state officials and the rich, was the involvement and active participation of women, particularly poor, single and divorced women and widows. However, the question of the actual influence of female protestors on decision-making and advocacy of their interests is still open.

At present, no border area (disputed land, enclaves) in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has a female leader of the local administration or local self-governance bodies. It means that women are actually excluded from the decision-making process at local level. Because of weak representation in the local administrations, women have difficulties in formulating their political goals and organizing political and public movements and parties.

Women are in subordinate positions not only in the family but also in the community and decision-making structures at all levels. Taking into account the tradition of multi-level subordination of women in the region and weak involvement of women in the decision-making process

The Kyrgyz use their women more than the Tajiks do to solve problems. Therefore, the Tajiks think that the law supports women during court procedures. The Kyrgyz use women as human shields. Also, according to Shariat law, force cannot be used against women

(from monitor's information, Tajikistan).

Women of border villages in Uzbekistan and young women cross the border to harvest cotton in Kyrgyzstan. This year the cotton harvest was not very big. Residents of the village wanted to kick out the Uzbek women explaining that they have enough workers. To solve the issue, women-leaders of the Kyrgyz village met with the women of the Uzbek border village and asked the women from Uzbekistan not to come to their village to work...

(from monitor's information, Kyrgyzstan).

Women having stronger opinions on religion are more politically active

(interview with a woman, 37 years old, Khochai village, Tajikistan).

both at national and local levels, it is obvious that women's groups have difficulties in formulating their own political strategies. Women face a high risk of being used by "other" interests. In Kyrgyzstan this was clearly shown when women were used as *human shields* during the election campaigns of 2005 and in Tajikistan we a lot of women in political parties, in particular, in the People's Democratic Party, which is pro-president, about 40% of the members are women. Considering the low level of women's independence in Tajikistan and their limited access to education, it is clear how and why such a high percentage of women's participation in the parties was achieved.

In general, the studied experience of women's participation in various conflicts in the region has shown that women's activity, firstly, is not always the result of increased opportunities for self-achievement and political participation, and secondly, women's activity is used by various groups to achieve their own goals.

Summing up the section:

- Women's focus on the family and household and the increased role of family-relatives and neighbourhood relations as an informal mechanism of social protection help women continue the traditional power hierarchy. In that sense, women's role cannot be considered just as definitely non-violent, and women – only as victims.
- The existing approach of describing men and women's roles in conflicts as opposites and stating that men's roles facilitate violence, and women's roles peace and stability, make it difficult to understand the experience of women and men's participation in conflicts.
- In practice, women and men's behaviour in conflicts is determined by their social status, so there are great differences between various groups of women and men depending on what strategies they apply in directly participating in open conflicts and what motives they use in conflict resolution. As to women, monitoring has shown that women from poor families participate in open protests and conflicts. This can be linked to the fact that families try to lower the risk of men being detained by the law enforcement bodies, otherwise, the family has to find money to pay bribes to release the detained person, as the level of corruption is very high. Also, the most vulnerable categories of women – single, widows and divorced – prevail in the group of women who are heads of families and take responsibility for protecting their interests.
- The presence of women and women's organizations both in conflicts and conflict resolution is not an indicator that they have and protect their own political interests. In general, practice has shown that women's activity is exposed to a high risk of being “cultivated” and used for the interests of various power structures and other stakeholders.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The approaches of many analysts and representatives of international agencies to considering conflicts in the Ferghana Valley are mainly determined by the current definition of the region as a potential source of conflict due to the poly-ethnicity of the population, complex borders and the existence of disputed areas and enclaves.

Monitoring confirms that the local population of the Ferghana Valley does not share the above-mentioned traditional cliché. For the local population, these factors are relevant since they have led to the establishment of various restrictions, mainly political ones, on crossing borders to trade and visit relatives in the region, which used to be one common political, economic and cultural space.

Conflicts in the region are caused by various factors including economic, social and political, interwoven with interethnic relations. Madeleine Reeves, one of those who have studied the Ferghana Valley, states that the perception of the region as a conflict zone is based on the concept of a nation-state where ethnicity, territory and citizenship should create isomorphous integrity, and any incompatibility between those three components of the nation – state is dangerously exposed to crises and conflicts⁷⁰.

Such approaches are not always applicable to the situation in the region where historical, cultural, geographic and political borders have not stayed the same, and for long periods throughout history, people living here have had close economic, religious and cultural ties. There were no nation-states as in the western world, although during Soviet times some attempts were made to create a common economic space and subordination to one political centre.

The collapse of the Soviet Union pushed the large soviet republics of Central Asia to establish their own sovereign states and delimit international borders with neighbouring states and these inherited borders have created disputes between the three countries of the Ferghana Valley – Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have not yet been resolved. The absence of common positions and lack of cooperation between the governments explain the unsettled border problems.

⁷⁰ Reeves M. Locating danger: Conflictology and the search for fixity (sic) in the Ferghana Valley borderlands. *Central Asian Survey*. 24 (1), 2005, p.68.

This example is important in terms of analysing the role of the state in conflicts. Existing conceptual approaches envisage some primordial natural antagonism between the various ethnic groups fighting for living space, resources, self-definition etc. The position of the state, which potentially could play the role of catalyst or participant in conflicts, is omitted. Situation assessments in the region that do not analyse the motives of the states leads to a warped understanding of the real essence of the problem and to considering ethnic, cultural and religious differences as factors directly leading to conflict.

As the survey showed, gender inequality in access to economic resources is of special concern in the region. The main problems are shortage of water and agricultural land; problems of access to healthcare and other social services; large numbers of young people and limited opportunities for getting good quality education and social services and lack of jobs. The position and status of women has become worse because of increased poverty, the tendency for men to own and control the main economic resources, the restoration of many patriarchal traditions and the low representation of women in central and local authorities. All these reasons are interlinked and are added to general factors such as the low level of economic development and overpopulation of the region.

Many questions require further study, for example, labour migration to foreign states and its impact on the situation in the region and specific countries in terms of gender issues. According to available data, most migrants (almost 80%) from Tajikistan are men, and in Kyrgyzstan the proportions of male and female migrants are 60% and 40% respectively. What are the gender specifics of the impact of these migration models – this question is still open.

There should be deeper discussion of the political participation of women, the capacity of women's organizations to participate in peaceful initiatives and the role of a gender sensitive mass media. Probably, the discursive perceptions of women's roles as peacemakers will have to be reviewed and the different roles of women and men in conflict initiation and resolution should be studied. Another layer of problems definitely requiring attention is linked to the increasing interest of young people in religion and the growth of religious intolerance in relation to those who have converted to other religions.

A specific threat can be seen in the decreasing level of trust of the population in state institutions and their ability to resolve the problems of society. So, concern is raised by the sympathy of young people for an Islamic caliphate as an alternative to the secular but weak and unstable state. Monitoring showed that the search for a fair society is one of the main reasons for young people joining radical groups.

The majority of problems in the region are structural and by not addressing them, early warning of conflicts is impossible. The situation analysis and monitoring data also identified the existence

of direct reasons, for example, numerous violations of human rights and public liberties in specific states and on the borders. Monitoring material contains descriptions of individual cases of murders and beatings of the population by the law enforcement and border forces on the borders. Together with the structural and direct reasons, such individual cases can serve as detonators of tension and lead to conflicts. Security has become worse in the region due to the growth of drug trafficking within and through the region and the activity of radical and extremist organizations.

Effective state governance and cooperation in order to achieve the long-term interests of the citizens of the states within this region are key conditions to maintaining stability in the Ferghana Valley, taking into account the main problems addressed in this report. Therefore, the main recommendation of this report to the national governments involved is that they should recognise their key responsibility for the changing conditions causing conflicts both in their own states and in the region in general. To address the many structural factors of conflicts the governments should develop comprehensive development strategies aimed at solving the basic social and economic problems jointly with neighbouring states.

There are certain conditions for moving forward and promoting regional cooperation. The Human Development in Central Asia Report (2005) showed that expectations of state disintegration, ethnic separatism and interstate conflict have fallen compared to the first years of independence and this has allowed the leaders of the countries to follow regional interests. However, barriers in the form of centralized presidential institutions of power and the interests of specific sections of the business sector linked to state structures still exist. Unfortunately, the March 2005 events in Kyrgyzstan and later events in Andijan led to victims among the civil population and new refugees, which have played a negative role. The ability of social discontent, public disorder and revolts to cross borders or to snowball to some extent hampers understanding the need for regional cooperation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

To central governments, local authorities and political leaders of the countries in the Ferghana Valley

- Governments of the countries of the region have to accept their key responsibility for the changing conditions causing conflicts both in their states and in the region in general. To address the many structural factors of conflicts, the governments should develop comprehensive development strategies aimed at solving basic social and economic problems jointly with neighbouring states, taking into account the gender aspects of those problems.
- Considering that shortage of water, land and other economic resources is one of the basic reasons for conflicts, in particular in the border areas, it is necessary to concentrate efforts on developing regional cooperation to find joint solutions to water and energy problems, and the possibility of finding appropriate solutions to the problems bi- and tri- laterally.
- Based on the fact that development of the Ferghana Valley is of interest to three states, it would be advisable to look at the possibility of developing gender sensitive regional development and poverty reduction strategies involving all the relevant states with equal responsibility. National poverty reduction programmes should contain specific measures to reduce social tension taking into account gender factors.
- Considering the worsening situation and women's status due to structural changes that have happened during the last decade, it is necessary to form a policy aimed at changing the existing dominant-subordinate gender relations creating conditions for re-orientating the "male" model of governance in favour of a more egalitarian model, which includes all categories of the population in the decision-making process.
- Governments should put their efforts into establishing appropriate conditions for crossing borders, particularly when medical and other social services, not available in their own country, are needed. In this sense, it is necessary to encourage cooperation between the local authorities in border communities.

- Considering that serious conflict factors are connected to the problems of young people in the Ferghana Valley, specific attention should be paid to immediately addressing youth unemployment and creating conditions to ensure equal opportunities in accessing good quality education, medical and other services. Governments of the region have to take into account the specificity of young people's problems when they elaborate the policy, since they are linked to problems of survival as well as lack of opportunities for self-fulfillment, individual freedom and self-expression.
- In order to integrate young people into communities and social relations in general and to cultivate constructive skills for a peaceful life, it is important to involve young people in the development of local communities, create conditions to form formal and informal youth associations and organize their leisure focused on their needs.
- Taking into account the refusal of the authorities to pay attention to them is one of the key sources of tension in the region, it is necessary to undertake specific actions to organise public ways of communicating with the population both at national and local levels. It is important to create the conditions for men and women and all social groups of the population to participate in this communication.
- Local authorities should initiate and implement trans-border projects on cultural, scientific and experience exchange between communities based on cultural-educational and research institutions.
- Civil society organizations should be relied on to promote cooperation and integrate the neighbouring states into the social, economic and political spheres.
- National governments and local authorities have to facilitate the development of suitable gender-sensitive methodologies of monitoring and evaluating the situation in the region, and use various ways of ensuring public and widespread discussion of the monitoring results.
- Governments of the countries of the Ferghana Valley should support information sharing, the setting up of networks of physicians, teachers, and scientists at individual and institutional level and support the regional mass media, civil society and network associations of cultural workers, in order to develop cooperation.

For civil society organizations

- Civil society organisations have to make efforts aimed at the early prevention of conflicts through developing initiatives and the participation of local communities, including women and young people.

- It would be advisable to develop programmes promoting women's participation in the decision-making process through trade unions, public associations and local self-governance bodies based on the priority of women's interests through promoting the professional interests of teachers, physicians, businesswomen parents and housewives. Thus, it should be possible to create additional channels to voice women's specific interests, form their political voice and strengthen their collective solidarity and resources.
- Also, it is important to increase the possibility of creating networks of scientists, cultural workers and NGOs working to improve regional cooperation and peaceful initiatives.
- Efforts should be made to provide marginalized groups of women and young people of the target groups with services to build their capacity and improve their influence and lobby their interests, using participatory principles.
- It is important to support country and regional gender sensitive studies looking at the impact of the programmes and policies of international and local organizations working in development and early warning and conflict prevention in the region. It is important to study issues of individual and group identity of men and women as representatives of different ethnic, religious and other social groups and categories of the population. It would be advisable to study types of leadership in the youth environment, the capacity and levels of male and female authority and influence in local communities, and gender aspects in the mass media in the region.
- Special efforts should be made to increase the gender sensitivity of the mass media highlighting conflicts and the situation in the region in general.

For international agencies

- International organizations are recommended to re-orient their existing approach to the region as a conflict and destabilised zone by changing the focus from interethnic relations to a more comprehensive analysis of the interrelations between the state and citizens. It is important to look at the problems of the inadequate response of state structures to the daily needs of the people as one of the key risk factors in the various conflicts and violations occurring in the region.
- Donors should work on developing more consistent regional strategies based on a common understanding of the threats and challenges related to drug trafficking, crime and terrorism, as an integral part of broader and more comprehensive objectives of development and human security in the Ferghana Valley and the Central Asian region in general.

- Attract and focus the attention of the international community to the problems of the region through projects and programmes designed to meet the long-term goals of human development based on a comprehensive gender analysis and not only focusing on prevention and early warning of conflicts.
- Facilitate the development and introduction of gender sensitive indicators in government policy and practice of international agencies and local NGOs working in the sphere of early prevention and warning of conflicts.
- Get the international community to understand the poly-semantic role, opportunities and risks of women's participation in peaceful resolution of conflicts bearing in mind the existing unequal and subordinated position of the women of the region in relation to state structures, the family and elder men and women within the family-tribal ties.
- Promote the development of expert, analytical, multidisciplinary capacity to develop suitable gender sensitive methodologies of situation monitoring and evaluation in the countries of the region.

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GLOSSARY

Ayil okmotu (Kyrgyzstan) – local self-governance body.

Adat – traditional law.

Bu-otynchi – women elders, religious supervisors. In Kyrgyzstan in recent years, the bu-otynchi have organized informal groups for young girls to collectively read the Koran and khadises, learn Arabic and discuss topics dedicated to morality.

Jamoat – local self-government bodies in Tajikistan.

Discourse – this report considers it as the availability of a certain approach and thinking on the early warning and prevention of conflicts in existing literature, which is accepted in the academic and political environment as the basis or starting point for explaining or analysing conflicts.

Aksakals' court – Council of Elders in a village (Kyrgyzstan).

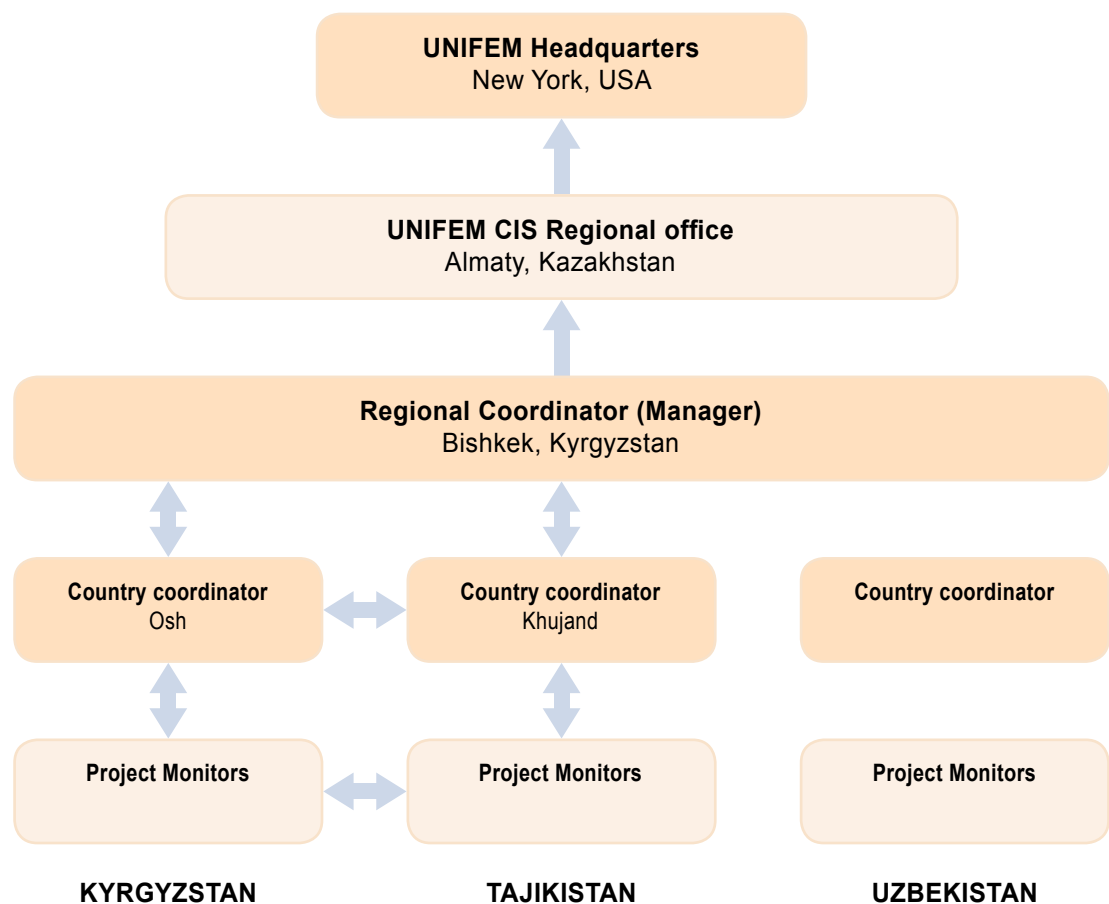
Khidzhab – headscarf worn by female Muslims in accordance with the religious rules of Islam.

Shariat – Islamic law.

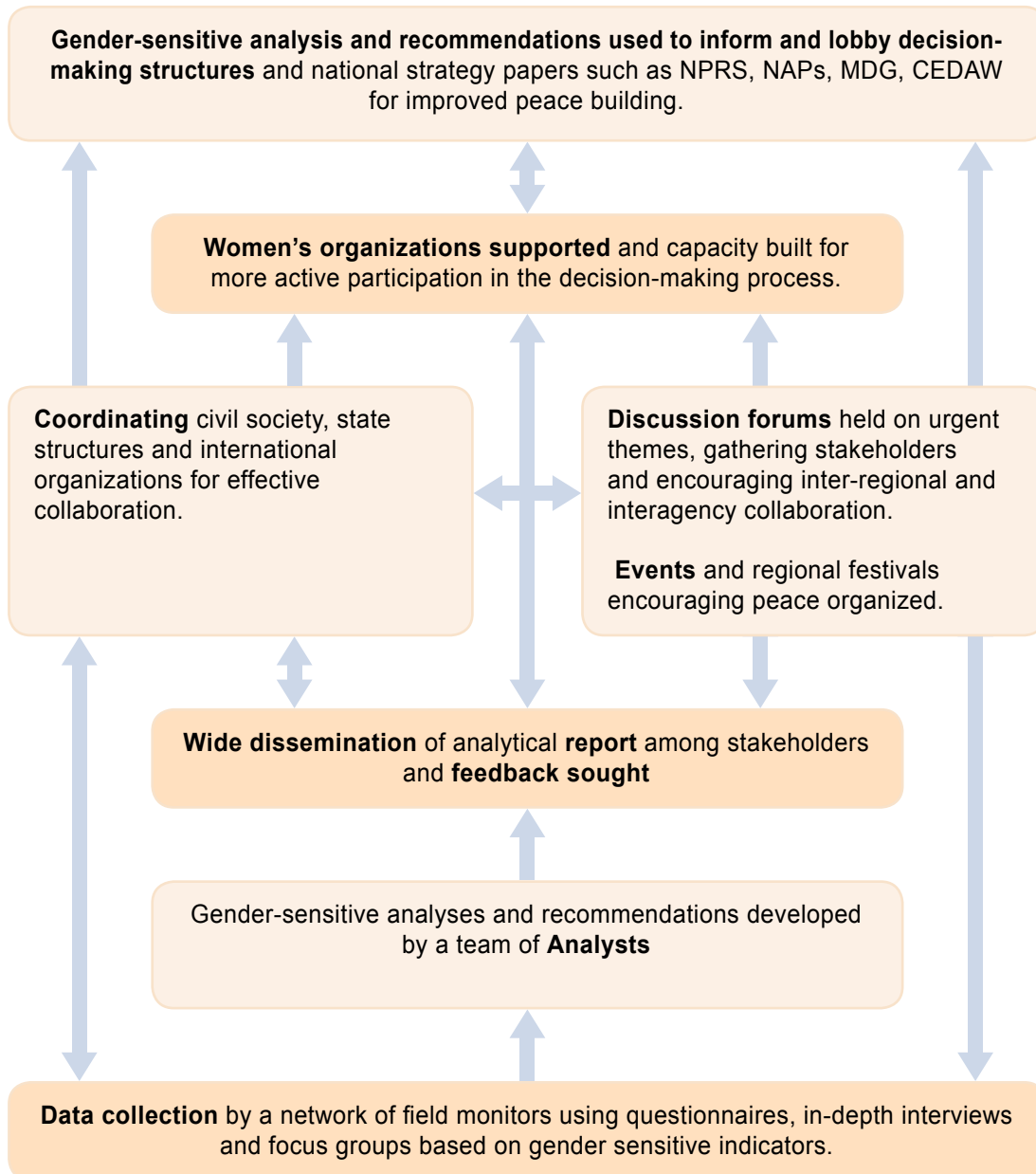
Egality – (French *Egalite* – equality) – concept of equal opportunity. This report uses it to equate the number of female representatives in political power bodies.

ANNEXES

Structure of the UNIFEM Gender dimensions of early warning and conflict prevention in the Ferghana Valley project



Project Monitoring System



UNIFEM Project Target Communities

Tajikistan – Sugdh Oblast

#	Name of community	Jamoat	Bordering
Isfara rayon			
1	Vorukh	Vorukh	Tojikon, Tajikistan – Ak-Sai, Kyrgyzstan
2	Todjikon	Tojikon	Ak-Sai, Kyrgyzstan
3	Chorku	Chorku	Naiman, Tajikistan – Kok-Tash, Ak-Sai, Ak-Tatyr and Samarkandek, Kyrgyzstan
4	Hojai Ajlo	Chorku	Uch-Dobo, Ak-Tatyr, Ak-Sai, Kyrgyzstan
5	Lakkon	Lakkon	Kara-Bak, Chon-Gara, Chon-Taala, Shor-suu, Kyrgyzstan
Djabor-Rasulov rayon			
7	Madaniyat	Gulhona	Tadjikabad, Selkan, Tajikistan – Leilek rayon, Kyrgyzstan
8	Selkan		Leilek rayon/KR, Madaniyat, Djuvildon /RT
9	Tajikabad		Kirgizkishlak/KR, dj. Gulakandoz, RT
10	Kairagach		Tajikabad /PT, Leilek rayon/KR
Bobojon Gafurov rayon			
11	Kistakuz	Kistakuz	Jany-er, Arka Leilek rayon/KR
12	Gafurov		Leilek rayon/KR
Spitamen rayon			
13	Farmonkurgan	Farmonkurgan	Bekabad, Uzbekistan
Asht rayon			
14	Oshoba	Oshoba	Dangara, Uzbekistan

Kyrgyzstan

#	Community	Bordering
Osh oblast		
1.	Osh – town, administrative center	Uzbekistan
2	Kerme-too, Aravan rayon	Uzbekistan, Andijan oblast
3	Kara-Suu, Kara-Suuski rayon	Uzbekistan, Andijan oblast
4	Gulcho, Alay rayon	
5	Myrza-Aki, Uzgen rayon	
6	Tuya-Moun, Aravan Rayon	Uzbekistan
7	Kashkaterek, Uzgen rayon	Uzbekistan, Andijan oblast
Jalal-Abad Oblast		
8	Jalal-Abad – town, administrative center	Uzbekistan
9	Kara-Dariya, Suzak rayon	Uzbekistan
10	Atabekov, Suzak rayon	Uzbekistan, Namangan
11	Maasy, Nooken rayon	Uzbekistan
12	Bazar-Korgon, Bazar-Korgon rayon	Uzbekistan
13	Nooken, Nokken rayon	Uzbekistan
14	Ala-Buka, Ala-Buka rayon	Uzbekistan, Kasansaiskii, Chustskii, and Yangikurgan rayons
Batken oblast		
15	Batken – town, administrative center	Tajikistan
16	Kyzyl-Kiya – town, Kadamjai rayon	Tajikistan
17	Isfana – town, Leilek rayon center	Tajikistan
18	Kyshtut, Batken rayon	Tajikistan
19	Kulunda, Leilek rayon	Tajikistan
20	Zumbula, Leilek rayon	Tajikistan
21	Jany-Jer, Batken rayon	Tajikistan
22	Aksai, Leilek rayon	Tajikistan, Isfara rayon and Jamoat Chorku
23	Ak-Tatyr, Batken rayon	Chorku, Tajikistan
24	Andarak, Leilek rayon	Tajikistan, Jabor-Rasul rayon
25	Dostuk, Leilek rayon	Tajikistan
26	Charbak	Batken

Gender-sensitive Early Warning indicators

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/researchers	Measure
Social and economic			
<i>Labour Migration</i>	Influence of migration on the socio-economic status of women and men.	Do women work outside the rayon, oblast, and country?	Number of women, age difference
	Impact of migration on living standards	If outside the country then where? Within or outside the region?	Proportion of women migrating inside and outside the region
		If so, how long do women work outside the rayon, oblast, and country?	Time, differentiate by rayon, oblast and country level
		What kind of things do women do?	Types of activities
		How often do they visit their families?	Frequently, rarely
		How often do women remit financial support to their families?	Frequently, rarely
		What is the income level in families with labour migrants?	Low, high, medium
		Income level from activity outside the rayon, oblast and country?	High, medium, low
		Do women leave their children with parents/in-laws in villages?	Number of children in the families, age and gender difference
		How has labour migration affected the children?	Number of homeless children, by gender
	Impact of labour migration on the traditional gender role	How has migration changed the traditional gender roles?	
		What is the age difference between women and men migrants?	
	Changing values in traditional families	How labor migration influenced to the family values	Values
	Degree of deterioration of intergovernmental relations	Is labour migration a factor of instability in the region?	Yes, no, why?
		Is labour migration causing interstate tensions? If so, in what aspects (border crossings, tensions with law-enforcement bodies and Customs, migrants do not follow local laws, migrants do not integrate into the local society etc...)?	Frequently, rarely, cases of tension
		Are there special intergovernmental agreements supporting labour migrants?	Effective, ineffective, why?

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/ researchers	Measure
Social and economic			
<i>Labour Migration</i>	Level of personal security as women and men cross borders and travel to markets	Do women face problems whilst crossing borders such as, paying bribes to border guards, threats to personal security and risks to life while crossing border rivers?	Number of incidents
		Are labour migrants aware of their basic human rights?	High, medium, low
		Are women and men involved in the informal sector facing abuse from law-enforcement officials?	Number of women and men involved. Types of informal activities by women and men
		Do women suffer more than men from the law-enforcement bodies?	Almost even, more men than women, more women than men
		Do women and men feel safe travelling between Ferghana Valley countries?	Safe, unsafe, reasons
	Number of cases of violence against women and men – migrants	Are there cases of abusing women's rights (rapes, arrests, sexual harassment, etc.) along ethnic lines by law-enforcement officials?	Number of cases
	Degree of drug smuggling alongside increased labour migration	How are men and women involved in drug smuggling?	More men than women, more women than men. Differences of participation of women and men
	Influence of unstable internal political situation on women and men in border areas	Cases of illegal land seizure by inhabitants of neighbouring countries	Number of cases
		Are there households in border areas that have temporarily relocated?	Number of households, indicate exact border areas
		Families relocated for security reasons	Families, who are heads of the family women or men?
		What is the role of women in "creeping migration"?	Political, economic, social
		Extent of families headed by male/females moved to other regions temporarily	Number of families headed by male/females . Identify which regions

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/ researchers	Measure
Social and economic			
<i>Access to land and property rights</i>	Land and property owners by gender	How have economic reforms, including land privatisation, considered the needs of vulnerable groups of women?	Existence of special state programmes or other activities
		Have women lost out in land distribution?	Quality of the land (stony, clay, soil, etc.)
		Do women have access to irrigation water?	Yes, no, far away
		Is there access to agricultural equipment for female landowners?	Available, not available
		Are women aware of their rights to land and property?	Incidents of women protecting their rights
		If so, are they likely to stand up for their rights?	
		Is there access to irrigation water?	Availability of irrigation water
		Are women involved in water and land resource management decisions?	Female members of local committees or commissions on water and land resources disputes
	Degree of common law prevalence over formal law	Do women and men follow common law? If yes, in what cases?	Usually, sometimes, never
		In what cases do women and men follow the formal law	Indicate cases
		Find out the reasons for following common law	
		Do widows without sons and divorced women have access to land?	
		Does it supersede the formal law?	
		Do women have land and property registered in their names?	What kind of property (land, house, apartments...)?

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/ researchers	Measure
Social and economic			
<i>Access to resources</i>	Impact of land and water resource disputes on women and men	Can clashes between the two lead to tension and conflict?	Always, sometimes, never
		Incidence of disputes	Frequency, reasons
		Does resource competition between the two communities across the border affect men and women differently?	More men than women, more women than men
		Involvement of women and men in incidents related to resource disputes	Women always, men always, women rarely, men rarely
	Impact of water and land shortage on women and men	Role of women's organizations in solving disputes over access to resources	Cases when women's organizations have been involved in disputes (successfully, unsuccessfully)
		Share of women and men in waterusers associations	Percentage
	Impact of credits on the living standards of women and men	Existence of credit organizations in the region	Number of credit organizations
		If so, do they have gender oriented micro-credit programmes?	Existence of credit programmes
		Are there organizations or programmes teaching women how to apply for credit and manage it?	Existence
		Difference by gender on value of credits	Different, the same
		How far away is the credit organization?	The location of a credit organization from its main customers
		Do women have the same possibilities of reaching credit organizations as men?	Financial resources
		What are the conditions for receiving credit?	Mortgage, percentage...
		Is there community pressure not to allocate micro credits, if women are the heads of households and there is no man around?	Cases
		Credit unions headed by women	Number
		On what activity does the received credit go (by men and women)?	Type of activities

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/ researchers	Measure
Youth			
<i>Official policy</i>	Impact of state policies on the status of young women and men.	Have governments got special youth policies?	Existence of strategies on youth affairs, do people know about them?
		Does state policy positively or negatively affect young people?	
		Are there special investment programmes aimed at young people?	Existence of programmes, and the number of young people in each programme
		What is the level of trust in government agencies by young women and men?	Number of cases of applying to the state agencies by young people and
		Participation of young women and men in solving community problems	More active young women than young men; more active young men than young women
<i>Education</i>	School attendance by girls and boys	Do girls and boys attend school equally?	More boys, more girls.....
		Girls being kept back from school, giving reasons	Number of girls not attending school
		Are there schools in cross-border villages and enclaves with native language of education?	Existence
		Existence of schools teaching minority languages (KG, UZ, TJ)	
		Is there equal access to higher educational institutions for young women and men?	Number of young women studying in higher educational institutions

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/ researchers	Measure
Youth			
<i>Religion</i>	Degree of religious influence on young women and men	What is the role of Islam in everyday life for young men and young women?	Frequency of attending the mosque
		Are women attending Islamic self-study groups? If so, are these groups divided according to ethnicity?	Number of Islamic self-study groups,
		Do young women and men participate belong to radical religious groups?	No, yes, often, rarely, what kind of things do they do?
		Identify the reasons for joining radical religious groups (values...) by women and men	Social, economic, political, spiritual
		Identify from which ethnic communities more represented in radical religious groups, by gender	Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, other
		Are there women among arrested Hizb-ut-Tahrir activists?	Number
		Are young women and men converting to other religions?	Protestantism, orthodox, bahhai, other
		If so, is transferred more by men or the women? What are the reasons?	Number of young women and men transferring worship Social, economic, political, spirit
		Is there tension between young people who have converted to another faith and young Muslim people?	What kind of tension
		Have there been changes in social norms and behaviour?	Lowered marriage age, polygamy spreading, arranged marriages becoming common
<i>Perspectives</i>	The perspectives for young women and men in the region	Is there any chance for young people finding jobs in the region?	Industry, agriculture, livestock breeding, informal trade
		If not, what kind of things young women and men do?	
		How do young women and men see their future?	Plans, wishes
	Existence of inter-ethnic marriages	Frequency of interethnic marriages	Number
		Possibility of receiving citizenship, if married to a citizen of a neighbouring state	

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/researchers	Measure
Position of women in the society			
<i>Violence against women</i>	Extent of violence against women in the region	Are women being abused by the law-enforcement agencies?	Number of cases
		How would men react if the authorities abused a woman?	Negatively react towards the abuser
		How would men react if a man of another ethnic origin abused women?	Conflict
		Do women and men see domestic violence as abuse or violence? Is this a source of tension within families or between groups (if couples are from different ethnic groups)?	Yes, No
		What is the situation with divorce?	Number of divorces, Economic and social reasons
		What is the incidence of rape, physical and psychological abuse?	Number of incidents
		What is the incidence of self-immolation?	Number of incidents
		What is the incidence of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation?	Number of incidents
		What is the incidence of bride kidnapping?	Number of incidents
	Extent of type of organizations that support violated women and men	Are there women's NGOs protecting the rights of women?	Existence of women's NGOs
		Are there crisis centres and hotlines designated to support women?	Existence
	Extent of legislation that supports the rights of women and men	Existence of law on Domestic violence	Existence, in practice, not in practice
		National laws on gender equality	Existence, in practice, not in practice
		Do gender separated statistics exist?	Existence in the national statistics committee, law-enforcement agencies
	Number of cases of abuse/harassment by security forces/law-enforcement agencies towards women and men	Increased imprisonment, harassment of men and women	Cases
		Cases of abduction of men and women and rumours of it	Number of cases

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/researchers	Measure
Position of women in the society			
<i>Political participation of women</i>	Extent of women's participation in governance at all levels of society	Are women represented in governmental bodies and decision-making councils?	Number of women members in decision-making structures
		Are there women's leaders in community-based organizations?	Number of women leaders
		What is the role of female officials in negotiations on urgent and important issues?	Significant, poor
		Are there women's networks at local/regional level?	Existence, facts, activities
		Do women's organizations participate in the decision making process on cross border issues?	Participation cases
		Women are involved in decisions about water and land resource management	Number of female members on decision making committees
	Activities aimed at maintaining peace and stability in the region	What kind of conflict prevention activity did women undertake?	Activities
		What is the effect of joint cultural events with cross border areas, initiated by women's organizations?	Promote understanding, pre-conflict situations created
		Diversity of peace and tolerance activities initiated by women	Kind of activities
		Are women more likely than men to protest against socio-economic (political) hardship?	Protests organized by women
		Are they inspired by men to protest in the hope that the police would be less brutal against female demonstrators?	Awareness, unawareness
		Do women organize unrest to protect arrested men on religious basis?	Protests organized by women
		Is there tension between the activities of the women's NGOs and religious conservatives?	Cases of disputes or conflicts
		Are there signs that such pressure makes women's groups more vulnerable?	Cases

Category	Indicator	Observation points/questions for monitors/researchers	Measure
Position of women in the society			
<i>Political participation of women</i>	International organizations supporting conflict prevention and resolution activities in the region	Extent of International organizations working in Ferghana Valley	Number of programmes and projects ongoing on conflict prevention and resolution
		International organizations supporting organizations addressing gender needs	Number of programmes and projects with a gender approach
	Existence of programmes addressing development and peace with a gender perspective		Number of programmes
	Gender sensitive actions and programmes initiated by the Governments		Festivals, meetings, information exchange activities by professional groups (teachers, farmers, etc.)

