

# **Gender Analysis for GIZ Programme Mineral Resources for Development**

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## Objectives

The following gender analysis aims to inform the internal GIZ mission about the current situation of gender equality in Kyrgyz Republic. It includes up to date statistics and information collected from different sources. It examines several topics including state regulations on gender based issues, violation of women's rights both in the families and societies, education and employment opportunities for women in general and in the mining sector, also there will be concluding points with recommendations for the programme.

The process of writing this analysis involves desk study of both internal and external documents written on gender issues in Kyrgyzstan. To make it easy to understand the paper is divided into subsections each dealing with the different gender aspect.



## General overview

Dissolution of the Soviet Union granted independence to Central Asian countries leaving them on their own. The transition period since independence in 1991 has been marked by social and economic difficulties for the people. Along with reforms gender balance in the public sphere that has been achieved by the Soviet Union started to decline as well. For instance, according to the World Development report during the first decade of independence economic activity of women of working age decreased from 81.6% to 42.3% and in some oblasts even more<sup>1</sup>.

Kyrgyzstan is the landlocked country that is situated in the heart of Central Asia. The population of the country is about 5,2 mln. people, among them 2,6 mln. are women. The country historically has been considered as one of the resource poor countries in the region and has been struggling with poverty and political instability. The post-Soviet period has been marked with reforms in every aspects of life; however these reforms did not deal and attempted to improve the gender equality. Unemployment among women within these reforms has grown. The employment rate of women is 22 percent was less than men for years<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, opportunities for women

<sup>1</sup> World Development Report 2012

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva\\_Kyrgyz\\_case\\_study\\_final\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva_Kyrgyz_case_study_final_Sept2011.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

both social and political that has been taken for granted before now it is the issues that women have to fight for.

Human Development Report that was published in 2011 reveals that Kyrgyz Republic is on the 126 places out of 187, which means that country is in the lower part of the group of countries with the medium human development, highlighting regional urban and rural disparities and inequalities between women and men. On the same year Gender Inequality Index in Kyrgyz Republic out of 146 countries was in 66<sup>th</sup> place, whereas Gender Index in 2012 was ranked 33 out of 86<sup>3</sup>. The government of Kyrgyz Republic has made number of efforts to regulate and develop legal framework to eliminate discrimination based on gender and to remove the gap in all sectors.

### **Declaration of Women's Rights**

Ever since independence Kyrgyzstan has ratified all major UN Conventions including Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is another document that the Kyrgyz Republic ratified and took responsibility to "take all measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and especially the state has to ensure that men and women should freely chose a spouse have the same right to enter the marriage and take this step with their own will<sup>4</sup>. The state should make sure that the couple will have same rights and responsibilities during the marriage and dissolution. However these ratifications are far from being implemented. The legislation of the country is slow and not all the requirements are met in accordance with the above listed documents.

### **Regulation of gender issues by the Kyrgyz State**

In the recent years the government of Kyrgyz Republic has made some efforts to regulate and develop legal framework to eliminate discrimination based on gender in all matters. The constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic affirms that women and men are equal in all matters. According to the Article 16 of the new Constitution all kind of discrimination based on gender, religion ethnicity is prohibited.

Moreover in 2012 the Kyrgyz government adopted The National Strategy of Kyrgyz Republic for Achieving Gender Equality until 2020 along with the National Plan to succeed in Gender equality in the country for 2012-2014<sup>5</sup>. This plan is designed to identify the main problems with regards to gender and work on improving economic empowerment of women, eliminating gender discrimination and increasing women's access to justice, creating a system of functional education and last but not the least is the promotion of higher representation of women in politics.

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<sup>3</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 2011

<http://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/countryinfo/>

<sup>4</sup> World Development Report 2012 [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva\\_Kyrgyz\\_case\\_study\\_final\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva_Kyrgyz_case_study_final_Sept2011.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Promote gender equality and empower women 2012

<http://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/>

## **Formal legal system and traditional norms regarding gender-based violence**

The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence has been adopted so the women will be protected from any assaults. Nevertheless, most of the women are not aware of their rights and do not usually sue against violence. For instance in 2006 there were 31, 392 registered crimes where 3615 were against women. In 2013, Kyrgyz authorities recorded 2,351 cases of domestic violence where 66.3 percent are physical beatings however not all became the judicial matters.

In addition in the rural areas of Kyrgyzstan there is a still widespread bride kidnapping which is rarely punished and still considered as an old tradition. There are no accurate statistics on this, because most of the times girls stay in their grooms house and keep silence. In spite of the fact that Kyrgyz Family Code sets the legal age of marriage at 18 regardless of their gender, there are cases when they enter the marriage even earlier. For instance in 2009, 18 percent of brides were between 15 and 19 years of age<sup>6</sup>. In the recent years it has become very popular and cheap to have a religious marriage, which means they do not register, but call the religious leader and ask him to make "Nikah". All these unregistered marriages automatically limit the rights of women in regards to property, divorce and inheritance<sup>7</sup>. Whereas, in registered marriages there is no legal discrimination on property and inheritance. Kyrgyz Family Code highlights that men and women are equal when there is a question of property. However in the practice, especially in rural areas women are discriminated and all the inheritance issues solved in favor of men. Women, especially in rural areas are not aware of their rights and do not know that there are some laws that protect their rights, therefore, most of the time they are left with nothing.

Traditionally Kyrgyzstan is a patriarchal country, where man is still considered as the main bread winner, whereas woman is the housewife who takes care of the children and does all the work about the house. In most of the cases newly married couples usually live with the parents of the groom and young bride has to serve all the family members as long as they are in the same house. The new role of young women in marriage is unpaid and perceived as it is normal. Thus she doesn't really have a chance to work and develop professionally. However in the northern part of the country the situation has been improving and women became more active and aware of their rights.

## **Economic situation**

### ***Education***

During the Soviet Union, education in Kyrgyz Republic was free of charge and it was compulsory for everyone. For this reason enrolment and literacy of both boys and girls was high. Secondary education is still compulsory today, nearly all children are enrolled. According to the data that was provided by National Committee on Statistics of Kyrgyz Republic in 2012 the enrolment of girls in schools is less than the enrolment of boys. The number of pupils in secondary schools is 1, 015,172 and only 499,379 are

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<sup>6</sup> National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010.

<sup>7</sup> World Development Report 2012 [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva\\_Kyrgyz\\_case\\_study\\_final\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva_Kyrgyz_case_study_final_Sept2011.pdf)

girls. In technical colleges the representation of girls is even less, among 31,032 only 9,025 are girls<sup>8</sup>. However, the numbers are different in universities where girls comprise 55% of all students because boys usually easily find jobs abroad and start contributing to their family incomes. Below you can see the table with the gender variances in choosing profession and specialization.

**Table 1** Gender based preferences in specializations (*Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic*)

	Women	Men
Natural Sciences	18%	82%
<b>Development of Mineral resources</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>98%</b>
Manufacturing machinery and equipment	3,5%	96%
Environment and life support	22%	78%
Food processing and Textile industry	95,3%	8%
Service	59,5%	40%
Humanitarian and Social Science	36%	64%
Education	86,2%	12%
Health Service	87,9%	11%
Economics and Management	61,1%	38%
Art and Culture	61,5%	38%
Industry	30%	70%
Construction and architecture	14%	86%

The most popular specializations among girls are food processing and Textile industry, education, health service, art and culture, economics and management and the least popular is Development of Mineral Resources.

### ***Employment and Salaries***

Despite the fact that the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic grants the equal rights to women with men, women across the county face various forms of discrimination in working places. Female unemployment is growing, for instance in 2005 the gap between men and women was 1.7 percent, but in 2011 it reached 2.3 percent. There are more unemployed women than men. Only 41 percent of economically active women in the country have jobs<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, it is important to note that in rural areas there are more unemployed women than in the cities. For instance in Naryn province 70 percent of women do not have jobs.

Gender discrimination is also noted in the hiring process, where women are deprived from job because of their reproductive roles. Most of the employers believe that due to the domestic responsibilities and childcare may prevent them from doing their job accurately and efficiently. They believe that women are not able to perform business trips when it is necessary, because it is assumed that they will not be able to leave their child for a long time.

In addition to the high rate of unemployment women are also lower paid than men and concentrated in the least profitable sectors of the economy such as education, social

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 7

<sup>9</sup> *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic 2011*

services and healthcare. Even within these segments, high and managerial positions are held by men. The gap between women and men's average salaries, in 2011 women's was 78, 4 percent of men's salary.

Nevertheless, considering the poverty of the population it can be noted that the poorest households are not headed by women. According to the statistics 20 percent of women headed families are poor and 2,8 percent are extremely poor. Whereas the level of poverty among men headed households are 30, 4 percent are 2.8 percent are extremely poor. Due to the lack of rule of law and discrimination in the working places most of the time women are pushed into the shadow and informal economy.

### Political participation

During the first decade of its history women were nearly unrepresented in politics. With 30% quota that was introduced in 2005 the number of women in parliament went from 0 percent up to 25 percent.

#### Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments %



From the tables above it can be observed that situation is changing year by year and women are more involved in politics than they were before. However, the numbers also vary based on the territory.

**Table 3** Number of civil servants holding public offices based on gender (2012)

	Civil Servants		Politicians & specialists		Administrative workers	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bishkek	41,3%	58,7%	27,4%	72,6%	42,4%	57,6%
Osh	28,3%	71,7	0,0%	100%	28,5%	71,5%

The table above demonstrates the difference between north/Bishkek and south/Osh. In 2012 there were no women holding seats in politics in Osh, whereas in Bishkek 27 percent were women. Bishkek and the north of the country is more westernized and more women are becoming active in politics, whereas in the southern regions people are more religious thus less women can be seen in politics.

### Gender and Mining sector

Distribution of the employed population among the sectors according to gender is uneven. The share of women in employment is highest in healthcare and social services (79%), education (76%), and hotels and restaurant services (65%). Men are most engaged in construction (95%), mining (91%), and the energy sector (81%)<sup>10</sup>.

Due to the constant problems in the mining sector in Kyrgyz Republic the profitable sector of the economy is losing its popularity among females. Only two percent of the students in the Mining Institute are girls, the rest are boys.

<b>Development of Mineral resources</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>98%</b>
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The same can be said about the average number of the employees that work in the mining sector. On the table below it can be seen how the numbers slightly change year by year.

**Table 4** Number and gender of employees that work in the mining sector

	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Mining Sector	8816	12144	9011	12517	9273	12560	9243	12921

The table above that was provided by National Statistical Committee looks very suspicious. The numbers are huge not only for women but also for men. There are few new mines opening now in the country, and if we count the employees of all working mines it is very unlikely that so many people work in the mining companies at all. Therefore, to have a clear picture, let's look at one mining company and see the distribution of jobs between men and women. A good example can be Kumtor Gold Mine an open-pit gold mine which is located in Issyk-Kul province of Kyrgyz Republic. According to their official website 95 percent of their workers are the citizens of Kyrgyz Republic, among 2720 temporary workers 2617 are the locals. Job variation based on gender type and level of employees are shown on the table below.

**Table 5** Type and level of jobs that men and women hold

A	Level	Total # of empl	women/men	# of empl	%
	High	127	women	31	24%
			men	96	76%
	Middle	380	women	98	26%
			men	282	74%

<sup>10</sup> World Development Report 2012 [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva\\_Kyrgyz\\_case\\_study\\_final\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/lbraeva_Kyrgyz_case_study_final_Sept2011.pdf)

	Low entry	2118	women	249	12%
			men	1869	88%
<b>B</b>					
	Technical	1929	women	37	2%
			men	1892	98%
	Administrative	260	women	127	49%
			men	133	51%
	Servicing	436	women	214	49%
			men	222	51%
<b>C</b>					
	Mine site	2385	women	267	11%
	& other locations		men	2118	89%
	Bishkek Office	240	women	111	46%
			men	129	54%

Douglas Grier, the Director on Sustainable Development at Kumtor Operating Company, explained that one of the reasons for imbalance is the Kyrgyz labor laws, which restrict the type of work women, can do in so-called “dangerous occupations”. So whereas there is a trend in other countries of women being used extensively as haul truck drivers in the mine pit, in Kyrgyzstan it is not possible due to the labor laws.

According to Chapter 25, article 306, it is prohibited to employ women for hard work with dangerous circumstances as underground jobs, moving and lifting heavy things. In addition the law outlines a list of industries, professions with deleterious and hazardous work where it is not allowed to employ women moreover there is also restrictions on the type and work load they can be given by the employer.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the substantial gains that have been made in last years in terms of gender equality, Kyrgyzstan still falls behind on several aspects of gender fairness. Gender disparities can take many different forms throughout the country. Therefore, policies that are adopted should not be only on the paper but also more attention should be paid for the enforcement of these policies.

Mining sector in Kyrgyz Republic had faced and still facing a lot of challenges both from the local population and the weak government agencies. Despite the fact that



there is a potential in employing women there are no new hires in mines due to the problems with the companies getting a social license to operate. Thus, mining jobs are seen as relatively unattractive and harmful.

Since gender aspects are not the main objective of the programme, the MRD programme will not have big impact on gender equality in the mining sector, however we as a programme try to keep gender balance in all our activities. When organizing roundtables, workshops, technical seminars and local council trainings we must look at the gender aspect and try to involve more women.

Also in the future, we need to discreetly but consistently remind our partners to think about gender equality and provide equal opportunities for everyone. We support development of modern mines with lots of technology where women tend to find more work than in the traditional, physical-labor based coal mines. Hopefully, our project will contribute to getting to the point where the mineral potential of Kyrgyz Republic will be used fully and women will be employed not only in the laboratories and in administrative jobs but also in the high level technical and managerial positions.