

## A note on including gender issues in projects across sectors

### A case of 'Pasture management' project: Kyrgyzstan

Women and men play important, but different, roles in the management of natural resources due to their different productive roles. Usually, men own the land, produce cash crops, and have access to various assets. Women rarely own land and are often confined to the production of subsistence foods. However, women are often responsible for collecting fodder and raising livestock, especially dairy cattle. Improving pastureland can reduce the amount of time women spend collecting fodder and feeding livestock. Additionally, women are usually the primary natural resource managers, providers of food security, and repositories of knowledge and expertise on indigenous plants, medicines, food and water. They perform many essential survival tasks and have developed valuable skills and practices that complement men's knowledge. But women's participation in natural resource use, decision-making, and implementation has been undervalued.

Gender analysis is a tool that can help identify and understand the different and changing roles, responsibilities, interests, knowledge and skills of women and men in pasture, agriculture, forestry, and other natural resources management. These differences must be fed into UNDP's programming on improving pasture management to ensure the interventions are effective, efficient and provide equal benefits to women and men beneficiaries.

UNDP Kyrgyzstan's **pasture management project** baseline did not include any gender-disaggregated data and the project design did not benefit from gender analysis. However, with support from the Gender Team, the Annual Work Plan of the project was revised and, as the first step in inclusion of gender issues into the project, a study on economic and social status of the households of pilot municipality was organized.

The study used gender analysis tool and results showed that:

- Women and girls were contributing significantly to the livelihood of households;
- They had lack of access to information about sustainable pasture management, lack of access to decision making, property to land and economic resources;
- Women were not represented at Pasture Committees;
- Population of the municipality had lack of access to health services because of high mountainous location and issues of women's reproductive health were not properly addressed.

To mitigate the identified gaps, the project developed and implemented the following gender activities:

- Organization of "Start Your Business" training in pilot municipality, where 70% of participants were women.
- Support in launching a sewing workshop by the women's community based organization, contributing to the reduction of unemployment and improved income of local women.
- Launch of the community radio with young local woman as a manager, and 7 out of 9 people working at the community radio being women.
- Launch of "Radio-Clinic" program on health issues in collaboration with the village health committee.
- Launch of the weekly "Woman's Hour" and plans to organize a program on legal issues.
- Involvement of 27 local women in the work on decreasing the emergency risks and landscape gardening and received some foodstuff for the implemented work.
- Organization of training on environment protection and ecology, pasture resources management, as well as on the project's activities for 28 schoolchildren (60% girls).
- Organisation of the ecological club is organized in the school.
- Plans to organize training for women of the village on environment protection and ecology, women's health and combating family violence.



This example shows that gender issues are cross-cutting and relevant to various intervention areas of UNDP. It is also never late to include gender issues into a project.