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SUMMARY REPORT
on the Research Results Climate Change and Gender Issues in the Batken Oblast

This report was developed within the framework of the project "Strengthening Climate Resilience of the Batken Oblast through Introduction of Climate-Smart Irrigation and Mudslide Protection Measures" funded by the Russian Federation and implemented by UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WUA	Water Users Association
RA	Rural Administration
SALSGIER	State Agency for Local Self-Government and Inter-Ethnic Relations
SPS KR	State Personnel Service of the Kyrgyz Republic
FPG	Family Physicians Group
CEDAW	The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
MoE&S KR	Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic
MH&SD KR	Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic
NAP	National Action Plan of the Kyrgyz Republic for Achievement of Gender Equality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
2018-2040 NDS	2018-2040 National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic
NSC KR	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
UN	United Nations Organization
UN Women	UN Development Fund for Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
RCADWU	Rural Community Associations of Drinking Water Users
SF	Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic
MSW	Municipal Solid Waste
FMS	Feldsher-Midwife Station
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
CEC KR	Central Electoral Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ES	Emergency Situation

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The Research of Climate Change and Gender Issues in the Batken Oblast was conducted within the framework of the project implemented by UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic and funded by the Russian Federation — Strengthening Climate Resilience of the Batken Oblast through Introduction of Climate-Smart Irrigation and Mudslide Protection Measures.

The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement was signed and ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic in 2019. The Government has adopted the 2019-2023 Program for «Green Economy» Development that outlined priority areas for sustainable development and measures for climate change adaptation.

The Kyrgyz Republic has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and confirmed the implementation of international obligations under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through nationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2020, the Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Kyrgyz Republic was presented to the UN[1]. The introduction of a gender mainstreaming approach is a prerequisite for sustainable development in all areas including climate change adaptation. On-site review of the situation to identify gender aspects of the local population and assess their perception of the problems associated with climate change can contribute to the inclusion of gender aspects in the development policies and programs at the national and local levels.

The purpose of the research is to identify, based on the available data analysis, how climate change affects the status of women and men in local rural communities of the Batken Oblast, and to provide recommendations on removing the barriers for women to benefit from innovative climate change adaptation measures.

1 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26372VNR_2020_Kyrgyzstan_Report_Russian.pdf

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

The **desk study** included the following:

- **Review of the policy framework** reflected in international and national strategic documents, development programs, and legislation.
- Analysis of **gender-disaggregated data of official statistics collected by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC) in the Batken Oblast** on the impact of climate change on women and men, taking into account the standard of living, poverty, types of energy used for heating, lighting, cooking, and waste disposal. Static data sources:
  - "Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic" annually updated statistical compendium[2];
  - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Snapshots 2018[3].
- Profile Analysis **of pilot Aiyl Okmotu (Rural Administration — RA)**.

Pilot RAs were selected based on the results of vulnerability assessment of local communities and identification of territories and irrigation infrastructure vulnerable to hydrological disasters in the Batken, Kadamjay, and Leilek districts of the Batken Oblasts. Seven municipalities were selected.

Table 1. RA localization data

#	RA	Altitude above sea level	Distance from the city of Batken, km	Borders on			
				RAs in KR		Districts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan	
1	Alga	1386 m	80	Halmion	Kyrgyz Kyshtak	Uzbekistan Ferghana district	-
2	Ak-Suu	1050 m	165	Sumbula	-	Tajikistan 3 districts	Tajikistan, Rasulovsky district
3	Kulundu	600 m	185	Suluktu	-	Tajikistan, Gafurovsky district	-
4	Markaz	600 m	135	Kadamjay	Maidan, Batken district	Uzbekistan	-
5	Orozbekov	1200 m	105	Halmion	Kadamjay	-	-
6	Samarkandyk	1550 m	38*	Ak-Tatyr	-	Shurab vlg	-
7	Tort-Gul	1200 m	0*	-	-	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan

RA profiles marked with an asterisk (*) did not contain this information, the data was taken from open sources.

The field study was conducted from January 11 to January 18, 2021 in the form of:

- semi-structured **interviews with the resources** of pilot RAs (heads of RAs, deputies of aiyl keneshs [rural councils] (women and men)), aiyl bashchi [village heads], chairpersons of aksakal courts, representatives of women's councils, activists from local NGOs, water users' associations and pasture committees. 33 interviews were conducted, 13 with women (39.4%) and 20 with men (60.6%).
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were held in each of the pilot RAs. A total of 161 people took part in 7 FGDs, including 58 women (36%) and 103 men (64%).

Table 2. Number of FGD participants

#	Rural district	Number of people	Women	%	Men	%
1	Ak-Suu (Leilek)	24	6	25	18	75
2	Alga (Kadamjay)	19	5	26,3	14	73,7
3	Kulundu (Leilek)	27	7	25,9	20	74,1
4	Markaz (Kadamjay)	19	1	5,2	18	94,8
5	Orozbekov (Kadamjay)	24	10	41,6	14	58,4
6	Samarkandyk (Batken)	23	8	34,7	15	65,3
7	Tort-Gul	25	21	84	4	16
	TOTAL:	**161**	**58**	**36**	**103**	**64**

2 Publications archive: http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchiny-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/
3 MICS Final Report, Kyrgyzstan, 2018 http://www.stat.kg/ru/itogovyj-otchet-komp-kyrgyzstan-2018/

The age composition of the groups was balanced: most of the participants were aged 35 to 55 years (43%), however, representation of youth (31%) and elderly (26%) was sufficient as well.

Table 3. Age of FGD participants

#	Rural district	25-35 years old	35-55 years old	Over 55 years old
1	Ak-Suu (Leilek)	3	7	10
2	Alga (Kadamjay)	10	5	5
3	Kulundu (Leilek)	5	15	10
4	Markaz (Kadamjay)	6	5	9
5	Orozbekov (Kadamjay)	5	15	3
6	Samarkandyk (Batken)	7	10	3
7	Tort-Gul	14	12	2
	TOTAL:	**50 / 31%**	**69 / 43%**	**42 / 26%**

3. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON WOMEN AND MEN IN THE BATKEN OBLAST

Characteristics of Pilot RAs

The analysis process was hindered by the quality of the information provided in the "village profiles" of the pilot RAs. None of them contains the data registration date. Given that socio-demographic indicators are changing due to natural population gains and losses, as well as migration, this form of information submitted without timestamps raises doubts about its reliability. General information about RAs (e.g., RA territory, distance from the capital city and regional center) was filled in partially. The profiles contain data on the age composition of the RA population broken down by gender. However, the attempts to use this data were often unsuccessful. Only 2 out of 7 profiles contained data on the gender composition of local councils and RA employees. Therefore, these data were obtained from the website of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Kyrgyz Republic.

According to the RAs' profiles, the difference between women and men population is insignificant in most pilot RAs (below 1.5%). The exception is Kulundu RA with more women by 4.6 percentage points.

Table 5. Gender composition of RAs population (unknown evaluation date)

#	RA	Population size	Women		Men	
			People	%	People	%
1	Alga	9 954	4 919	49,4	5 035	50,6
2	Ak-Suu	7 347	3 625	49,3	3 722	50,7
3	Kulundu	25 892	13 541	52,3	12 351	47,7
4	Markaz	15 754	8 040	51,0	7 714	49,0
5	Orozbekov	13 422	6 750	50,3	6 672	49,7
6	Samarkandyk	13 088	6 441	49,2	6 647	50,8
7	Tort-Gul	7 676	3 888	50,7	3 788	49,3

However, these data need to be clarified, since only three RAs answered our additional request sent to eliminate reconciliation exceptions. Upon comparing the updated data on gender and age with the previous data, it turns out that:

- there are more women than men in each RA;
- the ratio of boys and girls under 15 years old is approximately the same, which may be important in the data analysis, for instance, data on the number of stadiums and sports grounds on the RA territory;
- people of working age in all villages amounts to 30% of the population (slightly less in Tort-Gul RA — 27.7%);
- as for the number of pensioners, there is a general country-wide trend: there are more women pensioners than men; this is associated with a longer life expectancy and earlier retirement. A high percentage of men and a small difference in indicators compared to women in Orozbekov RA are somewhat out of this trend.

Table 6. Population of three pilot RAs of the Batken Oblast by gender and age categories (updated as of January 2021)

	Alga		Orozbekov		Tort-Gul	
Total population	**9,405**		**13,779**		**7,866**	
	People	%	People	%	People	%
Women	4 793	51	6 934	50,3	3 988	50,7
0-15	1 403	14,9	1 778	12,9	1 450	18,4
16-17	160	1,7	215	1,6	112	1,4
16-57	2 804	29,8	4 171	30,3	2 180	27,7
57+	426	4,5	770	5,6	306	3,9
Men	4 612	49	6 845	49,7	3 878	49,3
0-15	1 385	14,7	1 821	13,2	1 440	18,3
16-17	136	1,4	218	1,6	124	1,6
16-63	2 830	30	4 242	30,8	2 187	27,8
63+	261	2,8	564	4,1	157	2

The data on socially vulnerable categories in village profiles indicate that the share of benefit recipients is significantly higher in Samarkandyk RA (550 people) with a total population of 13,088. At the same time, the number of benefit recipients in Orozbekov RA with approximately the same population size (13,422) is two times less (203). Herewith there are only 396 benefit recipients in the largest RA — Kulundu (25,892 people). Samarkandyk RA also leads by the number of unemployed — 350 people.

Table 7. Socially vulnerable categories of the population

	RA	Benefit recipients	People with disabilities	Children among them	Pensioners	WWII veterans	WWII home front workers	Unemployed
1	Alga	N/A	108	n/a	555			113
2	Ak-Suu	189	162	29	N/A	-	8	-
3	Kulundu	396	248	139	2,061	1	18	31
4	Markaz	255	n/a	25	1,240	-	7	-
5	Orozbekov	203	379	66	1,143	43	14	229
6	Samarkandyk	550	n/a	66	1,057	1	3	350
7	Tort-Gul	264	144	33	579	5	2	-

It was most difficult to identify the number of people with disabilities, including children. Three out of seven RAs do not have complete data on this issue. As for the number of pensioners, reconciliation of profiles data and later data from three villages revealed discrepancies.

Table 8. Number of pensioners according to various sources from RAs

RA	According to profile data	As of January 2021
Alga	555	687
Orozbekov	1,143	1,334
Tort-Gul	579	463

According to the analysis, on average, there are more than 100 children per 1 kindergarten, the exception is Kulundu with about 82 children in 6 kindergartens on average. However, given that this RA has the largest population size, the number of children attending kindergartens is disproportionately small. At the same time, there is the same number of kindergartens with a large number of children in Samarkandyk RA, where the population is 12,804 people less (that is, almost 2 times) than in Kulundu.

Moreover, the workload for teachers is greater in Samarkandyk RA: an average of 15.2 students per 1 teacher, while there are 14.6 students per 1 teacher in Orozbekov RA, and 8.5 in Ak-Suu RA.

Table 9. Social education facilities

	RA	Kindergartens	Number of children	Schools	Number of children	Teachers	Vocational school	Number of students
1	Alga	1	139	6	1,472	108		
2	Ak-Suu	3	288	6	1,554	183		
3	Kulundu	6	490	9	4,189	381		
4	Markaz	3	302	6	2,681	242	1	239
5	Orozbekov	4	505	4	2,096	144		
6	Samarkandyk	6	655	7	2,529	166	1	138
7	Tort-Gul	4	436	5	1,486	125		

Profile data of some RAs on the number of healthcare facilities raise great doubts about the accuracy of the information. For instance, there is a large number of healthcare facilities in Alga RA. It is strange that there is no hospital in the most densely populated Kulundu RA, while the number of Feldsher-Midwife Stations (FMS) and Family Physicians Groups (FPG) is less than in Ak-Suu RA. However, in the absence of a hospital, the reported number of beds is 90.

Further doubts are raised by the fact that the distance to Ak-Suu RA is 165 km, and there are 2 ambulances in this municipality. Kulundu RA, located further away (185 km), has only one ambulance. This is despite the fact that the population of Kulundu RA is 2 times larger than in other rural districts, which means a potentially higher demand for emergency assistance in normal times. However, this is a high-risk area from the point of view of border conflicts, including violent ones. Orozbekov RA, located at a distance of 105 km from the regional center, does not have a single ambulance, same as Alga RA (80 km from the regional center).

Table 10. Social healthcare facilities

	RA	Hospitals	FMS	FPG	Ambulance	Pharmacies	Beds	Number of doctors	Number of nurses
1	Alga	5	1	1	-	2		-	-
2	Ak-Suu	1	3	2	2	2	6	2	23
3	Kulundu	-	3	1	1	7	90	-	-
4	Markaz	1	1	4	1	2	11	7	55
5	Orozbekov	1	4	1	-	3	4	3	16
6	Samarkandyk	1	3	2	1	3	42	5	30
7	Tort-Gul	-	3	2	-	-		2	15

According to RA profiles' data on the number of cultural and sports facilities, playgrounds exists only in two RAs. Obviously, this is a very small number.

Table 11. Social facilities

	RA	House of Culture	Library	Club	Playgrounds for children	Workers
1	Alga	1	2	1		
2	Ak-Suu	1	1	-		
3	Kulundu	3	3	-	2	5
4	Markaz	1	1	1	1	4
5	Orozbekov	1	1	-		1
6	Samarkandyk	1	1	2		8
7	Tort-Gul		2	2		6

Sports facilities can provide interesting insights, as this is a classic example of gender and budgeting analysis at the local level proved by the British experience. This method allows for estimating the extent to which sports grounds meet the interests and needs of girls and boys. It also provides data on the engagement of children and their parents in the discussions on sports to be developed in the territories of local communities.

Practical experience and observations during the field survey show that the gender approach was not applied in this regard. In fact, all these infrastructure facilities are focused exclusively on the interests and needs of boys and young men, while sports clubs are oriented on strength and combat sports.

Table 12. Sports facilities

	RA	Gyms	Stadium	Sports grounds	Sports clubs
1	Alga				
2	Ak-Suu	1	1	5	
3	Kulundu	3	1	5	3
4	Markaz	2	1	10	1
5	Orozbekov	4	3	4	2
6	Samarkandyk	3		5	2
7	Tort-Gul			2	

RA profiles provided some information on the total number of households. However, none of the profiles contained gender-disaggregated statistics on the heads of the households. The researchers managed to obtain official answers from some rural administrations with regard to the number of women-led households.

Table 13. Number of women-led households

RA	Total households	Women-led households among them	%
Ak-Suu	No data in the profile	195	-
Alga	2087	129	6.2
Markaz	3043	240	20.8
Orozbekov	2449	510	5.9
Tort-Gul	1806	106	7.9

It turned out that Markaz RA has the largest number of women-led households (20.8%). Comparing the obtained data with the national average (38.9%), it turns out that this indicator is lower in all pilot RAs. According to 2019 data of the NSC of the Kyrgyz Republic, the share of men-led households is 61.1% of all households.

During the interview and FGD, the researchers tried to find out whether there is a difference in the well-being of women-led and men-led households, but this attempt was unsuccessful. Most respondents do not see such a correlation. Although, on average, this difference is clearly visible and stable around the country. In 2019, 16.5% of men-led households and 10.0% of women-led households were categorized as poor.

Women's Representation and Leadership

Information about the composition of rural councils and the lists of municipal employees were available in the profiles of only two RAs: Kulundu and Ak-Suu. Information on the gender composition of rural councils is available on the website of the CEC of the Kyrgyz Republic. The analysis showed that Markaz (23.8%), Alga and Tort-Gul (19% each), and Kulundu (16.1%) have the largest share of women deputies in the rural councils. Ak-Suu RA has no woman deputies.

Table 13. Representation of women among deputies of local councils[4]

	RA	Number of deputies	Women	%	Men	%
1	Alga	21	4	19	17	81
2	Ak-Suu	21	0	0	21	100
3	Kulundu	31	5	16,1	26	83,9
4	Markaz	21	2	9,6	19	90,4
5	Orozbekov	21	5	23,8	16	76,2
6	Samarkandyk	21	1	4,8	20	95,2
7	Tort-Gul	21	4	19	17	81

Upon adopting the Law "On Amendments to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Elections of Deputies of Rural Councils"[5] (Articles 59-1 and 62), at least 30% of mandates shall be reserved for women deputies in each rural council. It is necessary to monitor the implementation of this requirement in pilot RAs.

4 https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/spisok-izbrannyh-glav-omsu/spisestnyh-keneshej-kp/batkenskaya-oblast/

5 The Law No. 117 as of August 8, 2019, adopted by the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic on June 27, 2019 http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111964?cl=ru-ru

As for the composition of municipal employees, there are more women in Orozbekov (34.8%), Tort-Gul (25%), and Kulundu (23%) rural districts. At the same time, according to 2019 data of the NSC of the Kyrgyz Republic, the share of female municipal employees around the country is 34.1%. Therefore, this indicator is higher than the national one only in 1 out of 7 pilot RAs.

Table 14. Number of municipal employees in pilot RAs, including women, %

#	RA	Total employees	Of these, women	% of women
1	Alga	18	2	11,1
2	Ak-Suu	18	2	11,1
3	Kulundu	21	5	23,8
4	Markaz	23	4	17,4
5	Orozbekov	23	8	34,8
6	Samarkandyk	19	4	21
7	Tort-Gul	16	4	25

The same indicator for the Batken Oblast is 24.1% that is the lowest of all regions.

Types of Economic Activity

According to the results of the questionnaire survey conducted within RAs, the types of economic activity are sufficiently diversified. Business and trade do not play a decisive role in the income structure of the population.

Table 15. Types of economic activity/ income sources

	RA	Agriculture	Gardening	Livestock farming	Migrant remittances	Business, trade
1	Alga	3	-	3	3	2
2	Ak-Suu	4	4	4	-	-
3	Kulundu	6	3	6	-	-
4	Markaz	1	2	2	-	-
5	Orozbekov	1	-	1	-	-
6	Samarkandyk	5	2	3	-	1
7	Tort-Gul	4	4	3	1	-

FGD allowed for expanding these results. Thus, according to general population, migrant remittances are of far greater significance. This is the opinion of residents of Alga, Orozbekov, Tort-Gul rural districts. Residents of Kulundu, Markaz, and Samarkandyk RAs noted that trade is the most important type of economic activity.

Coal mining (Samarkandyk), tourism, and handicrafts (Kulundu) were also named as additional sources of income.

Only 15 respondents applied for a loan, 7 of them were women. Orozbekov RA has the largest number of borrowers (6 people).

As for the goals, the respondents noted that they took out a loan for farming (11 people, most of them in Markaz RA), due to the "lack of funds" (8 borrowers, the largest number in Orozbekov RA — 5 people, including 2 women), to buy medicines (1) and pay off debts (1).

According to respondents, the majority of them spent money on family needs (in Markaz and Tort-Gul – for festive activities). Two people said they had invested funds in the construction of a house and only one woman from Alga RA spend money for education of children.

Among natural resources, the interviewees noted such assets as land, pastures and water.

Table 16. Natural resources

	RA	Land	Water	Pastures
1	Alga	5	3	
2	Ak-Suu	6	4	
3	Kulundu	1		
4	Markaz	4	1	
5	Orozbekov	6	2	3
6	Samarkandyk	4	4	
7	Tort-Gul	5		

The FGD participants also consider land and water to be the main resources. The topic of water resources was particularly strongly voiced by the residents of Ak-Suu and Kulundu RAs ("Water channel is our wealth"). Alga RA residents particularly noted the importance of pastures.

As for resource management, the residents of rural districts assign a leading role to rural councils, farmer committees, and Water Users Associations (WUA). In most RAs, residents highlight the engagement of the local community in resource management.

Table 17. Who performs resource management?

	RA	Rural council	Farmer committee	WUA	Population, community
1	Alga		2	5	1
2	Ak-Suu	5	4		
3	Kulundu		3	3	
4	Markaz	1		9	3
5	Orozbekov	1		4	2
6	Samarkandyk	5	2		4
7	Tort-Gul				1

General population highlighted the active role of rural councils, farmer committees, and WUAs (most of the FGD participants are from Markaz RA), but they also noted the role of pasture users' associations. The majority RA residents believe that women are involved in this process, except for Kulundu and Markaz RAs.

Table 18. Are women involved in this process?

	RA	Yes	No	I don't know
1	Alga	3	2	
2	Ak-Suu	4		
3	Kulundu		3	2
4	Markaz		1	
5	Orozbekov	1		
6	Samarkandyk	4		
7	Tort-Gul	1		

During the FGD, residents of some RAs were more optimistic about this question. For instance, in Kulundu and Markaz RAs, 7 people from each RA said that women were involved in this process. However, in Kulundu, 13 residents provided a negative answer. The majority of Tort-Gul residents (16 people out of 18) also believe that women do not take part in the process. On the contrary, the residents of Ak-Suu (9 out of 10) and Orozbekov (10 out of 12) municipalities positively assess the involvement of women in resource management.

When answering the question of what prevents women from taking part in resource management, the RA residents believe that overburdening women with household chores is the key factor. In a number of RAs, the reported reason is the lack of awareness and motivation among women.

Table 19. Are there any barriers to women's involvement in resource management?

	RA	There are no barriers	Household chores	They do not consider it important, they are not informed	I don't know
1	Alga	1	1		1
2	Ak-Suu	3	1		
3	Kulundu		2		
4	Markaz	1			1
5	Orozbekov			1	
6	Samarkandyk		3	3	
7	Tort-Gul				

The FGD participants also noted that the reason for that is overburdening with household chores. There were 14 participants from Kulundu RA. Of them, only 3 women believe so. 11 participants in Tort-Gul (all are women) proved that too. Some participants mentioned "mentality" and "gender" as barriers. This was especially clearly expressed during the discussions in Kulundu and Samarkandyk RAs. At the same time, the participants of some FRG mostly believe that such barriers do not exist. This is what the residents of Markaz and Orozbekov RAs think. These data correlate with the data on the number of women deputies in rural councils: Orozbekov is the leading rural district by the number of women deputies (23.8%). That means women's "visibility" in the decision-making processes at the local level is obvious in those elected bodies with a larger number of women.

The climate change survey block included an important question on the types of energy sources used by residents for heating, lighting, and cooking.

Table 20. Energy sources used by people

	RA	Electricity	Gas	Coal	Firewood	Dung
Heating						
1	Alga	4		7	8	4
2	Ak-Suu	4	2	4	4	4
3	Kulundu	6		6	6	6
4	Markaz					
5	Orozbekov	2	2	2	2	2
6	Samarkandyk	5		5	3	3
7	Tort-Gul	2		5	6	1
Lighting						
1	Alga	6				
2	Ak-Suu	4				
3	Kulundu	6				
4	Markaz	1				
5	Orozbekov	2				
6	Samarkandyk	5				
7	Tort-Gul	4				
Cooking						
1	Alga	3	2	5	6	3
2	Ak-Suu	4	3	3	3	1
3	Kulundu	5		5	5	5
4	Markaz	1		2	2	
5	Orozbekov	1	1	1	1	1
6	Samarkandyk	5	4	4	4	3
7	Tort-Gul				3	1

The table shows that electrical power is the main energy resource for all three types of applications. In fact, this is the most affordable power source. Theoretically, residents of all RAs have access to bottled gas, but in fact, it is used less than the so-called "dirty" fuels.

Of particular concern is the widespread use of dung, since, in practice (as confirmed during the FGD), women and adolescents are most often engaged in collecting, drying, and storing it. Accordingly, they are more exposed to the risk of infectious diseases. Most of all, this type of fuel is used by residents of Kulundu, Orozbekov, and Ak-Suu RAs.

As for the disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW), the village residents identified 2 types of activities: sorted (only in Alga RA) and unsorted disposal to the landfill.

General population gave more diverse answers during the FGD. They also noted that the waste is dumped into the landfill in most cases (this is especially often practiced in Orozbekov RA). 11 people (5 of them women) from Kulundu, 6 (1 woman) from Samarkandyk, and 3 (1 woman) from Markaz sort the waste before disposal.

The option of waste incineration prevails in a number of rural districts (the majority of such answers were received in Tort-Gul — 17 people, and in Samarkandyk RAs). Kulundu and Orozbekov residents said that "the waste is rotting". Respondents from Orozbekov and Samarkandyk RAs also said that they bury waste in the ground using special equipment.

In the block of questions on climate change awareness, absolutely all activists and the general population answered that they experience climate change issues in their territories. Kulundu and Tort-Gul residents talked a lot about these issues.

Residents of Kulundu (22 people) and Tort-Gul (15) RAs believe that this is represented by the decreased volume of annual precipitation. Kulundu (19 opinions), Orozbekov (9), and Tort-Gul (9) residents noticed an upward trend in temperature indicators.

The residents of Kulundu (23), Markaz (10), and Tort-Gul (10) believe that river runoff reduction is the main manifestation of climate change.

As for the climate change impact on agriculture, the residents of Kulundu (17) and Tort-Gul (11/14) noted the decreased yield of grain and grape-fruit crops.

Residents of absolutely all rural districts clearly noted the increased morbidity. The residents of Kulundu (21), Orozbekov (12), and Markaz (10) think that the morbidity rate of infectious diseases has increased. The increased number of circulatory system diseases was noted in Kulundu (21), Orozbekov (15), and Ak-Suu (11) (high blood pressure was the most frequent answer). Residents of Kulundu (21) and Tort-Gul (17) expressed the most concern about oncological diseases.

At the same time, answers to the question: "Which health care institutions do you go to?" showed that the residents of rural districts (9 opinions) most often go to district hospitals, Tort-Gul (15) — to FMS, and Markaz (8) — to FPG.

Markaz, Samarkandyk, and Tort-Gul rural districts are the leaders in terms of the frequency of utilization of medical services. The following are some common reasons for using medical services: high blood pressure, childhood diseases, diabetes, flu. Only one person named COVID-19 as the reason to go to the hospital. Two people went to medical institutions for preventive interventions and two more required a medical certificate. One woman noted that she went to a hospital because of complications of childbirth.

Representatives of all rural districts noted the increased number of emergencies (mudslides, landslides, severe winds). A verification question showed that residents of absolutely all rural districts consider climate change to be the main cause for such phenomena.

When asked which population categories suffer most from natural disasters, the majority of respondents provided a general answer — "local population". However, at the same time, 4 rural districts (Alga, Kulundu, Markaz, and Samarkandyk) believe that these are "poor families". In almost all RAs (except for Ak-Suu), respondents said that farmers suffer most. And only one woman from Tort-Gul said that these are women.

As for the assessment of needs and requirements, residents of all RAs noted a lack of knowledge, technical means, and financial resources.

Regarding the "positive deviance" block of questions, residents of all RAs noted that every local community has families and households that cope better with difficulties arising from changes in external conditions. Markaz and Tort-Gul residents noted that these households have better well-being because of their strong dependence on remittances from migrant workers. Residents of absolutely all RAs often answered that "the reason is their hard work". Residents of Alga and Ak-Suu said that families growing and selling fruits are prosperous in these villages.

The following question was asked to identify gender sensitivity: "If you had a choice in teaching children, who would you pick first?". Of those who answered this question, 21 people said: "son" (most of all in Orozbekov — 7, Tort-Gul — 6) and only 4 – "daughter". The answer "both" was given in 27 cases.

In addition, it is worth noting that interviews and FGDs showed that water inflow has become unpredictable — a large runoff in rivers and channels in early spring, and a smaller volume of water in summer when the demand for irrigation is higher. Erratic precipitation caused by climate change makes it difficult for farmers and water management agencies to predict, assess, and plan irrigation needs. Frequent landslides and mudslides clog the already dilapidated infrastructure, cause soil degradation, and affect water quality. The respondents confirmed that more frequent landslides, mudslides, and floods also affect water supply by destroying irrigation systems, clogging water streams with waste materials, consequently polluting the water.

The available water resources would be sufficient to cover the needs with proper planning and fully functioning infrastructure, but in reality, there is an acute shortage during the main growing season, especially in July-August. Shortage also depends on climate change that causes rapid melting of snow and glaciers.

Irrigation infrastructure remains inefficient in many places despite donor support over the past few decades, as well as the building and strengthening the WUAs capacity. The overall deterioration of infrastructure also means a decreased amount of water supplied, increasing resource shortage, especially compared to the volume that was consumed earlier. The existing ability and willingness to pay for services do not correspond to the level that would be sufficient for the adequate maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure.

In addition, residents of the southern regions are highly dependent on remittances from their relatives who migrated for work. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a decreased volume of remittances. According to the research data[6], the share of households with at least one member who lost their job within the country or had to return from abroad due to job loss was about 22%. About 5% of respondents reported forced return from abroad due to job loss. The share of households with at least one member who was unable to return to the country from abroad or had to postpone/cancel a trip abroad was about 14%.

6 On the results of "The impact of COVID-19 on households" sample survey. International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2020.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Of particular note is the poor quality of in-situ statistical data. The village profiles and collected data are contradictory, not linked to the dates of information collection, and are of poor quality. Their format is not completely unified. Data collection from these profiles represents great difficulties for gender analysis.

Special attention should be paid to the issues of women's representation in the public service sector, especially in institutions and organizations responsible for environmental development and emergency response. Women are not represented at the decision-making level in these public administration bodies; there are no mechanisms for implementing gender equality policies; these bodies implement a gender-blind approach in their activities. These bodies do not have special action plans/policies for ensuring equal opportunities and gender equality.

It is worth noting some positive changes in the work of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic (MES KR) related to the adoption of a number of departmental normative legal acts on gender issues, including on the prevention and response to gender-based violence.

Women are often a key part of communities, families, and local economy. As a result, it is women who primarily experience the devastating effects of climate change and largely determine the adaptability of a community. Women have the experience and knowledge to create community resilience in the face of increasing natural threats, but their experience is not in demand, and the motivation of women to participate in these processes in all pilot RAs is very low.

The problem of access to potable and irrigation water is becoming more acute every year in the pilot rural district of the Batken Oblast. Climate change has a direct impact on human health. However, their impact on women and men is different. The main aspects of such impact are as follows: diseases and mortality associated with temperature; health problems associated with weather events, air, food, and water pollution; epidemics associated with viruses disseminated by insects and animals; health problems associated with exposure to ultraviolet rays. All these aspects are registered in the Batken Oblast. Children, the elderly and women are most vulnerable population segments in case of emergency.

The following recommendations are proposed based on the conclusions.

At the national level:

- Integrate a comprehensive gender dimension, including in the sections on environmental issues and emergencies, into the elaboration process for national strategic documents and development plans.
- Improve the system for collecting gender-disaggregated data on access to natural resources, primarily to water and energy sources, and on the impact of natural disasters.
- Review the system of management, provision of state and municipal services, and implementation of state and municipal functions at the national and local levels taking into account the interests of various social groups, including women, girls, and vulnerable populations;
- Institutionalize the gender equality approach in politics, legislation, and the activities of the institutions involved as a part of work conducted to overcome the consequences of climate change and render relevant budgetary support;
- Support the development and adoption of gender action plans for all ministries and bodies responsible for nature protection, local and regional development;
- Introduce measures to increase the level of environmental awareness among women and girls in the 2030 National Strategy and the Action Plan for Achievement of Gender Equality;
- Include women's organizations and NGOs in the field of gender equality, international partners, including UN Women, and UNICEF in discussions on environmental policy issues;
- Institutionalize the participation of civil society organizations in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of environmental policy, in the processes of developing and implementing the adopted strategies and programs;
- The Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic (MHSD KR), as the authorized body responsible for promoting gender equality within the country, should undertake efforts to increase the capacity of its employees, including those in regional departments, in terms of informing about the impact of climate change on the status of women and girls;
- MHSD KR should analyze information on the number of social healthcare facilities (down to ambulances), in order to provide the population with access to medical services primarily in border and potential conflict regions;
- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic should explore the need to introduce temporary special measures for girls who want to get a degree in environmental studies;

At the local level:

- The State Agency for Regional Development should resume the revision, updating, and unification of village profiles, improving the structure of collected data and database, including the requirements for collecting gender-disaggregated data in the digitalization process using Sanarip Aimak platform;
- Increase the level of competence and commitment to gender equality principles among rural administration employees.
- Actively involve women's organizations and NGOs working in the field in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects aimed at measuring climate change impact;
    - Carry out advocacy and awareness-raising activities among the population to reduce the risk of climate change consequences for women and men and in terms of access to water. Such activities shall be carried out through WUAs and Rural Public Associations of Drinking Water Users with traditionally male employees;
    - Promote climate-resistant adaptive agriculture (cultivation of drought-resistant crops, use of water-saving drip irrigation technologies, introduction of soil fertility management measures, etc.)
    - MES KR and its territorial divisions, together with local authorities, should increase the number of public events (especially involving children and women) on emergency prevention, behavior during the emergency, and recovery activities.
    - Local authorities should plan and implement mitigation and adaptation measures for disaster risk reduction.

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