

Newsletter submission to PBSO: on GSPS

General information about the project:

A nation-wide research “Gender in Society Perceptions Study” (GSPS) has been completed in the framework of the joint programme “Building the evidence base to facilitate responsive gender policy and programmes for equality and lasting peace in Kyrgyzstan” by UN Women, UNFPA and IOM and in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR and the National Statistical Committee of the KR. Supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund the project aimed to strengthen efforts to empower women and girls and eliminate threats to gender equality through the clear identification of risk factors and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in community peace building, and to strengthen the capacity of government, UN agencies and NGOs for improved and gender-responsive policies and programming.

GSPS engaged a broad range of local actors, including governmental, academic, and NGO, to carry out a nationwide study across all 7 oblasts of Kyrgyzstan and cities of Bishkek and Osh using KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) methodology and encompassing both *quantitative* and *qualitative* indicators of gender equality and risk factors for threats to women and girls’ human rights across political, economic and social issues.

Study design and data collection phases:

Project activities included study design phase, when a team of 12 researchers led by International Researcher developed study methodology and quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview, focus group discussion and case study guides, endorsed also by members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). Data collection phase started with relevant trainings on data collection, Do-No-Harm approach, confidentiality, secure data storage and other trainings to strengthen the capacity of national researchers. A team of 12 qualitative field researchers, 3 quality control supervisors and the principal investigator conducted around 1,000 interviews, focus group discussions and case studies with around 1,700 respondents; while a quantitative team of 54 interviewers, 18 supervisors and 9 coordinators surveyed around 6,000 households, with a total around 16,000 respondents. Data was collected across five major research themes:

- (1) Women’s political participation
- (2) Women’s economic empowerment
- (3) Violence against women and girls: under-age marriage and bride kidnapping
- (4) Women’s involvement in labour migration
- (5) Women’s religious beliefs and practices



Training for field researchers on data collection



Field researcher is conducting an interview



Workshop with SAG members on endorsement of study materials



Researchers in the field preparing for the next focus group discussion

Data processing and analysis phase:

Data processing and analysis phase started with capacitation of national researchers on usage of relevant analytical software programs (CSPRO for quantitative team and MaxQDA for qualitative team). For the qualitative component, UN Women, under supervision of a Principal Investigator, employed 10 Field Researchers and 5 Research Analysts to code and analyse data and produce analytical reports. For the quantitative component, UNFPA/NSC had 6 Research Analysts and 9 Operators to process and analyse data and produce a report. The final GSPS report, produced by the Principal Investigator, integrates the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.



Training for field researchers on data coding and analysis, using MaxQDA analytical software programme

Based on the issues identified by the GSPS, workshops for relevant state and non-state actors on policy and programme formulation were conducted, with the aim of further informing future action. In addition, the GSPS findings will inform NAP 1325 recommendations, the 2016-2018 Implementation Plan for the National

Strategy for Gender Equality, UN agencies' strategic plans and the programming priorities of civil society actors. Final conference on results of GSPS was conducted for a wide range of state and non-state stakeholders, marking also the closure of 18-months project in September 2016.



Final Conference on Results of GSPS

GSPS and peacebuilding:

The GSPS team's understanding of peace and peacebuilding starts from the individual. If peace is to be conceived of as "freedom from disturbance, violence, or war", then acts of violence that rob individual women of such freedom can be considered breaches of peace. Such violations of women's peace range from physical violence, to psychological violence, to sexual violence, to economic violence, and to the religio-cultural violence. The GSPS has explored the beliefs, attitudes, and practices that are used to conceptualise, justify, and actualise such acts of violence, and how such barriers may be overcome. Such individual violations of women's peace are supported by systemic ways of believing and perceiving. In concert, these systems create a society in which such violence against women is justified, its importance minimised, and its sufferers encouraged to remain patient and silent.

Live voices of GSPS respondents:

Respondent 1: GULNARA, Women's Economic Empowerment

Living in Karakol (Issyk-Kul oblast), Gulnara never thought she would become a "mother for the needy," as she is called locally. Instead, she started off as the owner of a small office producing authentic souvenirs. Currently, it is a successful tourist shop that employs over 40 women; thereby, helping the City Administration address unemployment.

Gulnara is the chief designer and teaches the basics of local souvenir design to needlewomen there. She believes that women, if well-trained and supported, can do many things: even start their own business. One of Gulnara's goals as an entrepreneur is to pass on her specialized knowledge to the next generation of businesswomen. To help families in need, she intentionally hires single mothers or those responsible for caring for disabled people. That is where her nickname originates.



Respondent 2: ROZA, Women's political participation

In spite of being kelin ("daughter-in-law" from Kyrgyz) in Naiman (Osh oblast), Roza became the first ever female Head of the Village Executive Branch. To reach this political post, she had to go through various familial and societal challenges, having to fulfill traditional expectations of caring after all family members and staying home with two children. Reflecting on conditions many women find themselves in, the politician proclaims, *"Besides the demanding public service, for example, local women are also expected to serve their husbands at home after long office hours. I envy our men."* If not for her supportive parents-in-law, Roza would not have worked in political office. They, and not her husband, saw a professional in their kelin and wanted her to bring good to the wider community. Thus, with Roza's term, 70% of Naiman dwellers now have easier access to drinking water, can take their children to a daycare, and enjoy trash-free village walks. Although the politician continues to face random criticism from locals on her "choosing a career over own family," Roza trusts she and her parents-in-law made the right decision because if one can go beyond own house, it is shameful not to.

When home, Roza enjoys the quality time spent with her school-aged boys, one of whom has been in a wheelchair for a few years. Sharing her life story, the brave woman accepts, *"Even if women cry when they face difficulties, Naiman men may start abusing alcohol instead. At least, we don't give up, even if we cry."*

