



GSPS | GENDER IN SOCIETY
PERCEPTION STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kyrgyz Republic



OCTOBER 2018

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FOREWORD

The Kyrgyz Republic has made significant progress in advancing democracy and the rule of law, and in development and peace building since gaining independence in 1991. A young population holds the potential to further secure social and economic development. Yet prosperity, stability and justice are increasingly being held back by a resurgence of patriarchal norms and conservative interpretations of cultural practices. The import of foreign religious thinking, some of which tries to capture and distort home grown traditions that have often featured tolerance, may not only block societal progress but also sow disunity among the peoples of Kyrgyzstan.

Key to the people of Kyrgyzstan's better future is understanding, acceptance and commitment to the notion of equality among Kyrgyzstanis, across ethnicity, clan, geographic origin - and gender. Only when the half of the population that is female is provided with their constitutional rights to equal opportunity and access to justice can the country build sustained prosperity and stability.

What is blocking Kyrgyzstan from fully unlocking that potential? In the Gender in Society Perception Study (GSPS), the Kyrgyz Republic, UN Women, UNFPA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), together with the principal donor, the UN Peace Building Fund (PBF), explored the knowledge, attitudes and practices of women and men of Kyrgyzstan in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment in order to understand the remaining obstacles and develop recommendations on how to overcome them.

Covering five thematic areas, namely, Violence Against Women and Girls, Women's Economic Empowerment, Women's Political Participation, Migration, and Religion, UN Women, as the project's lead agency, conducted extensive qualitative research through a number of national researchers who were trained in advanced social research methodologies. UNFPA supported the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic in conducting a large nationwide quantitative survey. IOM, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and many state entities provided substantial assistance in preparing for and carrying out the research.

The purpose of the study was to inform both policy makers and development partners on how to capitalise on the potential of engaging women as change agents and to best facilitate popular attitude and behavior change in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. Equality is enshrined in the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, and its further promotion will strengthen country-wide peace and stability.

Our research has for the first time confirmed scientifically many previously assumed facts, while also generating a body of new knowledge and broadened understanding of the factors that hinder women's equal participation in family and public life. Some of these findings were unexpected. All the findings will help state institutions and development partners respectively plan, legislate, programme and implement more effectively, to ensure that women and girls are better protected and enabled to play a full part in building good governance and peace.

Women's rights are human rights, and prosperity and peace both at home and in the wider society can only be ensured if women and girls are treated with respect, can live a life free of violence and fear, and are perceived as independent actors and agents of positive change. We hope that the GSPS reports will inspire readers to commit to and take action on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Original research data will also become available to academia once anonymised. The National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic has already published its report on the quantitative component of GSPS.

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More detailed lists of research and management team members involved in the qualitative and quantitative components are annexed.

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The implementation of Gender in Society Perception Study (GSPS) was a collective effort, and we owe sincere thanks to the many people who led, participated and contributed in countless ways. We thank everyone who was involved in the design, data collection, data processing and data analysis phases of the study, and we wish to highlight the following contributions:

UN Peacebuilding Fund:

The UN Peacebuilding Fund is to be thanked for its generous funding providing for the opportunity to conduct this research project, which was also financially supported by UN Women.

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic:

We would like to thank the many state agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic who supported the project in various ways. We would like to highlight the assistance provided by Ministry of Labour and Social Development for their facilitation and participation in key project events. We also acknowledge and appreciate the strong commitment by staff of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic which was the quantitative component's implementing partner.

Joint Steering Committee:

The Joint Steering Committee (JSC), co-chaired by the Office of the President and the UN Resident Coordinator with membership from state and civil society organisations and UN agencies, provided oversight over implementation of GSPS. We are grateful to JSC members for monitoring progress to ensure achievement of key results.

Joint Steering Committee Secretariat:

We also thank the JSC Secretariat for regular facilitation between stakeholders and for monitoring progress towards achieving project results and for raising public awareness about joint Government-UN peacebuilding efforts in Kyrgyzstan, including GSPS.

Research Respondents:

The GSPS would not have been possible without the participation of more than 7,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan who devoted their time, energy, and insights to the study as respondents. It is thanks to them for us to be able to present the findings in this and other GSPS-related reports.

Recipient UN Organization Partners:

The GSPS also benefitted from the support and managerial guidance of all three of its implementing partners, UN Women as lead agency and coordinator of the qualitative component, UNFPA which coordinated the quantitative component, and IOM which provided technical support to the overall study. We also thank all UN staff who supported the work, and the three agencies' staff, who offered written contributions, comments, ideas, and generous feedback.

Stakeholders Advisory Group:

The Stakeholder's Advisory Group (SAG) represented a wide range of state stakeholders, research institutions, experts and civil society actors. The SAG served as a platform for multiple state and non-state stakeholders to inform, advise and consult on the research methodology and instruments, and ultimately approving them. We are deeply grateful to those who gave their time to this endeavour and showed their ownership of our joint effort.

Research Team:

Finally, special thanks go to the entire research team, of both the quantitative and qualitative components. Without their oftentimes unflagging dedication, the production of this report would not otherwise have been possible. We acknowledge with gratitude the substantial contributions of the quantitative research team for the produced quantitative analytical report, which was integrated into this report. We also thank the qualitative research team for their commentary, additions, and for their own insightful and detailed reports that were the basis of this write-up.

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THE UN PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UNPBF supports the Kyrgyz Republic in building and supporting peace and stability after the tragic events of June 2010. In 2010 the UN PBF allocated USD 10 mln. to Kyrgyzstan for immediate response projects to build peace and trust in the regions of the country affected by the conflict. In 2013, in response to the President's request, the UN Secretary General approved allocation of additional funds for systemic peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and strengthening of institutions to prevent a recurrence of conflict. In Fall 2017 the UN PBF agreed to support implementation of a new Peacebuilding Priority Plan to run until November 2022.

A Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was created by a decree of President A. Atambaev in the spring of 2013 to formulate a peacebuilding plan and approve projects for its implementation. The JSC consists of 28 people representing the Parliament of the country, offices of the President and of the Government, governmental agencies, civil society organisations and UN agencies. The JSC provides strategic guidance and oversight over the process of development and implementation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP). It subsequently monitors and steers the implementation of the PRF projects funded by the PBF, as well as monitoring progress in terms of the achievement of PPP key results. The JSC is co-chaired by the Head of the Presidential Office of the Kyrgyz Republic and the UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan. Decisions are made in the framework of the JSC by its participants on a consensus basis.

In June 2013, based on a peacebuilding needs analysis report, the JSC developed and approved the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) for Kyrgyzstan (2013 - 2016). The Peacebuilding Needs Assessment was based on the results of more than 120 interviews, workshops in Osh and Bishkek, and various conflict assessment reports, as well as on the main ideas of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (2013-2017), the Concept on Strengthening the National Unity and Interethnic Relations approved in 2013, the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) for 2012-2016, the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security approved in 2013, and other

documents which considered the country's needs for development in the post-conflict period. The PPP was aimed at achieving the three peacebuilding priority outcomes:

1. Critical laws, policies, reforms and recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, are implemented to uphold the rule of law, improve access to justice and respect, and to protect and fulfill human rights.
2. Local self-government bodies, in partnership with related state institutions, and civil society, bridge divisions and reduce local tensions.
3. Policies, pilot initiatives and approaches are developed and implemented that enable the furtherance of a common civic identity, multilingual education and respect for diversity and minority rights.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund approved the allocation of USD 15.1 mln. to the Kyrgyz Republic to support the 2013-2016 PPP implementation. UN agencies in cooperation with national partners developed ten project proposals that were reviewed and approved by the JSC. Three other projects in the area of peace building were supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund with the aim of "Building the evidence base to facilitate responsive gender policy and programmes for equality and lasting peace in Kyrgyzstan".. The GSPS was one of these. The programme was financed through the UN Peacebuilding Fund's Immediate Response Facility (IRF) modality.

KYRGYZSTAN'S PEACEBUILDING AND GEWE CONTEXT

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked and mountainous country in the Central Asian region. It gained its independence in 1991. With a population of about six million, one in three Kyrgyzstanis is deemed to be living below the national poverty line¹. The economy is dependent on migrant remittances and a major gold mine. The country places 136 out of 176 on the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. It ranks 120 out of 188 countries and territories on UNDP's 2015 Human Development Index. The Gender Inequality Index puts Kyrgyzstan 90th out of 159 countries¹.

Kyrgyzstan has taken important legal steps to support women's empowerment and gender equality. It has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. It is committed to the Beijing Platform for Action and the Paris Declaration. With the assistance of UN Women, Kyrgyzstan developed the first National Action Plan in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

While the legal framework is progressive implementation of laws has been slow and incomplete. For instance, violence against women as documented by the CEDAW Committee continues to take many forms, including domestic violence, bride kidnapping, trafficking, early marriage and physical abuse, despite the passage of new laws against violence. The negative reinterpretation of some cultural and social practices increasingly restricts women's rights to control their lives. Expectations around the provision of unpaid domestic care inhibit rural women in Kyrgyzstan from taking advantage of employment opportunities, with rural women and girls in general having restricted access to productive resources. Women are notably underrepresented in politics, and specifically in decision-making on peacebuilding in the aftermath of the 2010 ethnic violence in and around the cities of Osh and Jalalabad.

KYRGYZSTAN'S PEACEBUILDING CONTEXT:

Inter-ethnic violence has at times plagued Kyrgyzstan. In the last year of the Soviet Union in 1990, the town of Uzgen suffered inter-ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks which was quelled by Soviet paratroopers.

At the point of independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan was an ethnically diverse country where just above half its population was ethnic Kyrgyz. During the 1990s, nearly all of the 300,000 ethnic Germans, many ethnic Koreans and a large proportion of ethnic Russians departed. By 2010, close to three quarters of Kyrgyzstan's population of six million was ethnic Kyrgyz, while almost one in six of its people were ethnic Uzbek.

Historically Osh city had been predominately Uzbek. As the economy failed in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union, there was an inflow of ethnic Kyrgyz from rural areas to the city in search of employment. This translated into increased competition over territory and business in Osh, often along ethnic lines. Yet neither in Osh nor elsewhere in the country was there inter-ethnic violence. Uzbekistan's government was not seen as using its "diaspora" in Kyrgyzstan to put pressure on its neighbour, and irredentism amongst Kyrgyzstan's ethnic Uzbeks' was very low, especially after the killings by Uzbek security forces of hundreds of protesters in Andijan (Uzbekistan) in May 2005. Due to allegations of high-level corruption and fraud in the February 2005 Parliamentary elections, Kyrgyzstan faced a severe political crisis which led to the non-violent ousting of the Akayev government that April. A transitional government took over and elections in July 2005 resulted in opposition candidate Kurmanbek Bakiev assuming the Presidency. The new government did not tackle the problems of corruption and poverty effectively and was accused of collusion with organised crime.

In April 2010 a popular uprising started that was violently repressed by the government, which was subsequently overthrown. Order across the country started to fray and the state lost its monopoly on power. In a village close to the capital Bishkek, ethnic Russians and Meskhetian Turks were attacked by a mob and driven off their land. That May and June

¹ World Bank Country Data. Kyrgyzstan.
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=KG>

² UNDP. Human Development for Everyone. Briefing note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report. Kyrgyzstan, p.5.
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/KG_Z.pdf

ethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks took place in and around Osh and Jalalabad cities. While the exact circumstances are still under dispute, it is clear that supporters of the ousted regime participated in the clashes on the Kyrgyz side in Osh and that various interests, including business-related on both sides of the ethnic divide, fuelled tensions that resulted in the deaths of scores of people and the burning down of entire neighbourhoods, primarily Uzbek, in the city of Osh. The exact number of those killed remains uncertain but ranges from 400 to several thousand. The violence subsided in mid-June 2010. The inter-ethnic violence was accompanied by numerous cases of sexual violence³.

During the 2010 conflict, women often took steps to reduce tensions. They pressed their husbands and sons to stay at home and avoid getting swept up in the violence. In Aravan, women of both Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnicity succeeded in keeping both communities at a physical distance from each other, so no one was hurt. In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, women in Osh and elsewhere convened across ethnic lines to jointly bake and distribute bread to those who had lost everything. This symbolic act is still vividly remembered. In 2010 UN Women helped convene and then supported the Women's Peace Network, an informal association of women, mainly Kyrgyz but including ethnic Uzbeks and others who tried to re-built inter-ethnic relations in communities around Osh and Jalalabad which had been affected by conflict and set-up a conflict early warning system that operated until 2012.

In February 2013, with guidance from UN Women and in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kyrgyzstan adopted a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 (2010). UN SCR 1325 and the subsequent seven SCRs on women, peace and security (WPS) recognise the multiple roles that women can play to address a wide range of peace and security challenges, including in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as in security sector reform and prevention of violent extremism.

The WPS resolutions underscore that for peace to be sustainable, women should act as agents of change, have their rights protected and participate fully in resolving security challenges.

Much progress has been made to stabilise the situation in Kyrgyzstan since 2010. A referendum on 27 June 2010 approved a new constitution that established Kyrgyzstan as a Parliamentary Republic. A Presidential Election on 30 October resulted in Almazbek Atambaev assuming the Presidency in a peaceful handover from Interim President Roza Otunbaeva on 1 December 2011. Parliamentary election in 2015 and Local Elections in 2016 passed off peacefully. However, in both the proportion of women in Parliament and local assemblies reduced significantly. Incumbent President Almazbek Atambayev was not allowed to run again in presidential elections in October 2017 because the constitution sets a single six-year term for the head of state. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, the former Prime Minister, was elected President of the country in the first round.

Some of the root causes of conflict remain, especially in relation to the rule of law, access to justice, tensions over access to resources at the local level, and norms and perceptions regarding respect for diversity. These root causes must still be addressed to prevent the recurrence of violence and to ensure that all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, regardless of their gender, age and/or ethnicity feel that their rights are protected, and they can participate without fear of discrimination. Currently women face significant obstacles to their equal participation in the public sphere and full rights' protection. It is hard to imagine a truly peaceful Kyrgyzstan while women continue to feel excluded from political and economic life and face various forms of violence including forced and early marriage. It is in this context of achieving better protection and increased participation of women and girls in the post-conflict environment that there is a need to understand the underlying gender norms and perceptions, which are also obstacles to sustainable peace. Understanding these norms, attitudes and beliefs is essential to developing solid policy prescriptions to support women's inclusion and secure peace.

³ UN Women. Post-Conflict Women's Needs Assessment in the Southern Kyrgyzstan. 2010, p.5, <http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Post-Conflict-Womens-needs-assessment-in-Southern-Kyrgyzstan-2010.pdf>



GSPS PEACEBUILDING
APPROACH

GSPS PEACEBUILDING APPROACH

The Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS) was funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). As part of its efforts, the PBF has undertaken a key initiative on gender that aims to “contribute to gender equality by increasing the participation of women in political processes, strengthen their voices in post-conflict planning processes and address their specific post-conflict needs”. The GSPS takes a step towards achieving these goals by providing data and knowledge to enhance Kyrgyz governmental policy, UN agency efforts, and NGO programming on women’s equality, political participation, public voice and activism.

The GSPS seeks to promote coexistence and the peaceful resolution of conflicts by providing reliable information and analysis on risk factors for gender inequality and threats to inclusive security in Kyrgyzstan.

The GSPS team’s understanding of peace, security 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 peace and security range from beatings at home (physical violence), to psychological pressure to conform to the religious beliefs of one’s in-laws (psychological violence), to rape as the consummation of non-consensual marriage (sexual violence), to the forced ceding of one’s wages to in-laws and husbands (economic violence), and to making continued employment conditional on removing one’s hijab (religio-cultural violence). The GSPS explores the beliefs, attitudes, and practices that are used to conceptualise, justify, and actualise such acts of violence, and considers how such barriers may be overcome through policy change and programmatic interventions.

But the GSPS is not simply a study of “micro-violence” and “micro-peace”. As our research demonstrates, such individual violations of women’s rights are supported by systemic ways of believing, perceiving and behaving. These social and institutional systems create a society in which such violence against women is justified, its importance minimised, and its sufferers encouraged to remain patient and silent. What may seem like isolated instances of private violence are widespread, and in many cases supported by culturally elaborated discourses and norms. Such pervasive gender-based discrimination impedes women’s access to the public sphere, including their capacity to contribute to post-conflict peacebuilding and to access post-conflict resources⁴.

Kyrgyzstan has emerged from several violent upheavals, that involved widespread inter-ethnic violence between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. These episodes led to an increase in gender-based violence, with rape and harassment occurring throughout the country.⁵ In the aftermath, child marriage and arranged marriage tended to spike as parents sought to protect their daughters by putting them under the assumed protection of a husband.⁶ Both the sexual violence itself and the subsequent response created new populations of women and girls with high post-conflict needs.

Locating these phenomena within the belief systems explored by the GSPS, one can see that although societal attitudes in no way compelled such damning post-conflict outcomes for women, neither did they provide a counter-narrative or counter-rationale to forestall the violence and parental response to it. Rather, beliefs about a woman’s “place”, as well as ways of interpreting “consent” and of asserting gender and ethnic dominance, were easily deployed to justify these acts. If Kyrgyz society is to avoid repeating such widespread gender violence – both in conflict and in the daily existence of the female half of its population – its members must reflect on the gender beliefs that they hold and the relations that these beliefs encourage between men and women.

4 For an introduction on the importance of understanding peacetime gender norms to prevent and respond to gender differential violence during conflict, see Françoise Nduwimana. “United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security: Understanding the Implications, Fulfilling Obligations.” New York: Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), undated. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/cdrom/documents/Background_Paper_Africa.pdf

5 See Atayeva (2011) and Radnitz (2010, 2014). Nor was this the first time cross-ethnic sexual violence appeared in Kyrgyzstan in the wake of political unrest. Valery Tishkov wrote an extensive description of cross-ethnic sex crimes – including rape, torture, and harassment – which occurred in 1990, using court documents to describe the events in painful detail. See: Tishkov (1995).

6 Ismailbekova (2012) explores this phenomenon and its consequences for young girls’ education, employment, and involvement in the public sphere.

In addition to gender-based violence, the 2010 conflict caused deep insecurities amongst women and girls regarding access to housing and land, jobs and livelihoods, justice, information, health care and other social services as revealed through the Post-Conflict Needs Assessment in Southern Kyrgyzstan.⁷ Much progress has been made since 2010 to reduce these insecurities. However, what has become evident from the peacebuilding process in Kyrgyzstan is that while legal and institutional reform is essential to re-establish a sense of security for all, it is not sufficient, as social mores, beliefs and perceptions also significantly effect behaviour in support of, or working against, women's security. Establishing a gender-equal peace requires a clearer understanding of the prevailing gender practices and their causes. By documenting, understanding, and analysing these tendencies, the GSPS aims to help us better understand the prevailing root causes of insecurity and produce recommendations for more effective policy and programmes.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which was launched with UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 in 2000 and has since been expanded through seven additional UN Security Council resolutions, provides a broad framework through which to analyse women's participation, the protection of women's rights and women's security. It acknowledges the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in peace and conflict, and argues that women's political, social and economic empowerment and gender equality is essential to peace and stability.

UN SCR 1325 was drafted with conflict or post-conflict settings in mind, while subsequent resolutions have broadened the focus to non-conflict related environments, and underlined the global relevance of the WPS agenda, in times of both war and peace. As of 2016, 28 of the 57 participating States⁸ of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have adopted a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, reflecting a broad diversity of national settings, all linked by a common commitment to supporting gender equality and women's empowerment through more effective participation and protection of women's security.

⁷ UN Women. Post-Conflict Women's Needs Assessment in the Southern Kyrgyzstan. 2010, p.5, <http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Post-Conflict-Womens-needs-assessment-in-Southern-Kyrgyzstan-2010.pdf>

⁸ OSCE. Designing Inclusive Strategies for Sustainable Security Results-Oriented National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security, 2016, p. 4. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/294731>

UN SCR 1325 affirms the importance of women's participation and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning and post conflict peacebuilding and governance. For Kyrgyzstan, UN SCR 1325 was particularly relevant in 2010, when ethnic conflict raged in the south and general political unrest gripped the country. As described in the previous section, Kyrgyz and Uzbek women played a key role in reconciliation, dialogue and post conflict peacebuilding. Yet more could have been done to ensure a gender perspective in humanitarian planning, to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, and later to guarantee full accountability for acts of sexual violence committed during the conflict, as called for in UN SCR 1325, and subsequent WPS UN SCR's.

Nevertheless, Kyrgyzstan demonstrated its commitment to the WPS agenda by becoming the first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to adopt a 1325 National Action Plan in 2013. It included 5 goals: 1) to develop zero tolerance towards violence against women, 2) to elaborate an institutional protection system for women, 3) to create and support secure environments for women, 4) to strengthen the role of women in security, and 5) to enhance the readiness of the response mechanism to protect women in conflict situations. The focus of Kyrgyzstan's first 1325 NAP was less on participation in political processes and more on women's protection against sexual violence, which had been a dominant issue in UN SCR's 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013). The violence that occurred in 2010 is likely to have informed the decision to emphasise the prevention of sexual violence and readiness to support survivors. However, by 2013 Kyrgyzstan's legislators and activists were not only reacting to the previous conflict but also looking ahead to supporting the development of policies, programmes and administrative bodies that would lead to "zero-tolerance towards violence against women and girls" in non-conflict situations.

The threat of sexual violence in post conflict situations is particularly grave where sexual violence in conflict has not been properly addressed. As UN SCR 2106 (2013) emphasises, sexual violence can, "significantly exacerbate and prolong situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of [international] peace and security." In Kyrgyzstan, while peace and security have been largely restored, sexual violence, including bride kidnapping and child marriage, is widespread. Based on the national survey results of the quantitative study, implemented by UNFPA and the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic,

22.1% of marriages are based on kidnapping. According to UNICEF research, 24% of all marriages involve minors.⁹

In its 2015 report the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stated that;

“The Committee is deeply concerned that bride kidnapping appears to be socially legitimized and surrounded by a culture of silence and impunity and that cases of bride kidnapping remain underreported, as they are considered a private issue that should remain within the family. The Committee is concerned that only one perpetrator of bride kidnapping was convicted in the period since 2008.”¹⁰

CEDAW added that it is, “also concerned about the persistence of child and forced marriages, notwithstanding the setting of the minimum age of marriage at 18 years.”

Adapted to Kyrgyzstan’s post conflict situation, UN SCR 2106 offers useful recommendations to address conflict and post conflict sexual violence. The resolution “encourages Member States to include the full range of crimes of sexual violence in national penal legislation to enable prosecutions for such acts.” It “underlines the important roles that civil society organisations, including women’s organisations, and networks can play in enhancing community-level protection against sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations.” More broadly it calls for;

“security [and] justice sector reform initiatives, including through legislative and policy reforms that address sexual violence; training in sexual and gender-based violence of justice and security sector professionals and the inclusion of more women at professional levels in these sectors; and judicial proceedings that take into account the distinct needs and protection of witnesses as well as survivors of sexual violence.”

Kyrgyzstan has taken important steps to address sexual violence through legal and policy reforms. These include the 2013 passing of a law against bride kidnapping, making forced marriage a criminal offence punishable with up to ten years in prison. The administration of marriage rites to minors by religious leaders was criminalised in 2016. In 2017 a specific law on domestic violence was promulgated. These are important steps, but they have not led to many convictions as society remains largely unwilling

punish perpetrators of forced and child marriage. To prevent violence against women and girls requires a deeper understanding of cultural norms, beliefs and perceptions that goes beyond the passing of legislation.

Increasing women’s political participation and public engagement is a regular feature of all WPS UN Security Council resolutions. States are urged to ensure increased representation of women in local, national, regional and international mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. UN SCR 1889 (2009) calls on member states to help in “countering negative societal attitudes about women’s capacity to participate equally.” UN SCR 2122 (2013) took the agenda even further by including provisions to facilitate women’s full participation and protection in political processes. It specifically requests member states “to ensure women’s full and equal participation in all phases of electoral processes, noting that specific attention must be paid to women’s safety prior to, and during, elections.” In addition, it encourages “Member States to develop dedicated funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance capacities of organisations that support women’s leadership development and full participation in all levels of decision-making.” Meanwhile, the UN Secretary General’s Seven Point Action Plan on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding also underlines the need for women’s representation in post-conflict governance, noting that “the UN will ensure that technical assistance to conflict-resolution processes and countries emerging from conflict promotes women’s participation as decision-makers in public institutions, appointed and elected, including through the use of temporary special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment and quota-based systems.”¹¹

Based on these UN SCRs, as well as on CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and OSCE commitments, Kyrgyzstan adopted temporary special measures to ensure that representation of one gender is limited to 70% in legislative, executive and administrative bodies. Progress was made in increasing women’s engagement in the civil service, with women comprising 40% of all government servants, but they tend to hold non-managerial positions and only in certain ministries and departments.¹² Women currently fill only 27% of political positions (and less than 20% in

⁹ Multi-indicator cluster research, UNICEF, 2014 quoted in Comparative Gender Profile of the Kyrgyz Republic 2017, UNDP.

¹⁰ CEDAW Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan, 11 March 2015

¹¹ Report of the Secretary-General on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding, Tracking Progress: 7-Point Action Plan, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf

¹² National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2013). Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008-2012. Bishkek. p.108.

the National Parliament, the Jogorku Kenesh). And although the number of female politicians holding executive posts increased sharply after the amendment of the Election Code in 2007, which introduced gender quotas into party lists for parliamentary elections, it is currently decreasing.¹³ Only about half of the party lists abide by the 30% quota, and in local councils less than one in ten council members are women.

As CEDAW concluded in its 2015 report, this low participation of women in political life is “owing to persistent traditional and patriarchal attitudes, lack of implementation of adequate temporary special measures and insufficient capacity-building and campaign funding for potential women candidates.”¹⁴ To overcome these obstacles requires more than just legislative measures, with further steps including “awareness-raising activities for politicians, community leaders, journalists and general public.”¹⁵

To fulfill the promises of UN SCR 2122, the Seven Point Action Plan and other WPS-related commitments regarding women’s participation in political life and decision making, requires a deeper understanding of the “traditional and patriarchal” attitudes that CEDAW identifies as root causes for the lack of progress over recent years. Public perceptions of female politicians, forms of women’s political activism, routes and obstacles to attaining political positions, and female politicians’ own assessment of their motivations and associated tradeoffs all need to be analysed in order to be able to make effective recommendations on how women’s participation in politics can be nurtured and increased over the longer term.

Inclusive economic recovery and development is key to sustainable peace building. UN SCR 2122 recognises that “the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilisation of societies emerging from armed conflict.” It welcomes the September 2013 Peacebuilding Commission declaration on women’s economic empowerment for peacebuilding, which emphasises that, “inequalities and discrimination against women and girls in social and economic opportunities can constitute obstacles to effective peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery.” The declaration further calls upon Member States to:

“...take measures to promote sustainable livelihoods for households led by women, especially widows, in

13 Ennis Nurmatov, Radio Azattyk (2016): Is MP constituency unaffordable for women? Available at <http://rus.azattyk.mobi/a/27713088.html> (Accessed May 6)

14 CEDAW, *ibid*
15 *Ibid*

*post-conflict societies, including through financial support and access to productive resources and sustainable income-generating activities. In this regard, we stress the importance of assisting post-conflict countries in creating favourable conditions that can generate decent jobs for women, nurture their business skills, encourage them to join the workforce, and deliver the financial services that these women need, both in the formal and informal sectors”*¹⁶

Since Kyrgyzstan’s independence, female labour market participation has drastically decreased, especially in the formal economy. Participation of women is now 49.4% compared to 77.1% for men.¹⁷ Reasons include the demise of industry as well as the decline in day care provision, as pre-school enrollment for children 3-6 years old is only 26%.¹⁸ In 2015 the CEDAW Committee expressed concern regarding women’s high unemployment and the high proportion working in the informal sector. Lack of inclusive economic development is likely to also have a negative effect on peacebuilding and post conflict security, especially of women and girls. Therefore, the GSPS research aims to illuminate the constraints on full participation of women in the labour force, through the analysis of perceptions of working women and the experiences of women entrepreneurs.

Two issues that are intrinsically linked to the WPS agenda but are less prominent in the existing UN SCRs are those of migration and religion. Migration tends to be addressed within the context of forced displacement, which is mentioned in all but two of the WPS UN SCRs. UN SCR 1889 (2009) for example urges respect for the humanitarian character of camps for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and women’s protection in them. Displacement was a characteristic of the 2010 conflict in Kyrgyzstan when IDPs’ protection and their ability to return to their pre-conflict homes was an issue. But the UN SCRs says very little about the protection and participation of displaced women in non-conflict affected settings, such as those who have become internal economic migrants within Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the Kyrgyz State Migration Service estimates the number of labour migrants to the Russian Federation alone in 2016 as 540,000.¹⁹ It has been estimated that four in ten labour migrants are women.

16 Peacebuilding Commission, Draft Declaration Women’s Economic Empowerment for Peacebuilding, 20 September 2013 http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/women_economic_empowerment_draft_declaration.pdf

17 Comparative Gender Profile of the Kyrgyz Republic 2017, UNDP

18 Comparative Gender Profile of the Kyrgyz Republic 2017, UNDP

19 Kyrgyz Republic State Migration Service, “Overview of migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic”, available at <http://www.mz.gov.kg/reports/view/2>

The GSPS research on migration considers how labour migration from Kyrgyzstan influences women's equality and empowerment and affects their overall security. It finds that while labour migration can be an empowering experience for the more educated and economically secure women, for the vast majority of women studied it does little to increase their sense of empowerment, as they continue to feel limited by cultural norms and values. Educational background, availability of financial resources and support networks abroad can all contribute towards more positive migration experiences, especially better employment prospects and new empowerment opportunities. Some women who face challenges in migration are also able to develop resilience and coping mechanisms which can then translate into "post-migration growth" upon return to Kyrgyzstan. But support and positive conditions are needed to ensure that women can be empowered through their migration experience and these are rarely found in the main migration destinations of Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey.

How migration may affect men and women's capacity to engage in reconciliation and/or conflict abroad, or when they return, is challenging to discern. This question became more pertinent after the April 2017 Metro bombing in Saint Petersburg, which was carried out by a recent immigrant to Russia who was born in Osh (Kyrgyzstan). Some have suggested that migrants' vulnerability to Islamic radicalisation and violent extremism increases due to discrimination, abuse, isolation and the search for identity while abroad. Ensuing anger and frustration may cause some people to turn to groups like ISIS for empowerment and support.²⁰ However, without extensive research in Russia it is difficult to verify this claim, and the GSPS research did not attempt to do so.²¹

Violent extremism, counter-terrorism, and WPS are intrinsically linked in the most recent UN SCR on WPS 2242 (2015). It encourages member states, UN entities and UN women to, "conduct gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalisation for women, and the impacts of

²⁰Edward Lemon and John Heathershaw, "How can we explain radicalization among Central Asia's migrants," 2 May 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/edward-lemon-john-heathershaw/can-we-explain-radicalisation-among-central-asia-s-migrants>. Already in December 2016 a series of attacks was allegedly planned to be executed in Moscow by citizens of Tajikistan and Moldova, and ordered by an ISIS mastermind based in Turkey who was known to Tajikistan's authorities. 15 December 2016, <http://kommersant.ru/doc/3171149>

²¹ For more on this topic see also IOM, Migrant Vulnerabilities and Integration Needs in Central Asia, Regional Field Assessment in Central Asia 2016, Astana.

counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organisations." UN Women carried out such research in Fall 2016 within the context of another research project on *Women and Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia*.²² Within the context of this research, Kyrgyzstan's counter-terrorism police reported that 863 citizens had become foreign fighters between 2010 and June 2016, including 188 women.²³ When women travelled to Syria and Iraq, in the vast majority of cases they were described as following their husbands and doing so because they wanted to keep their families intact. In Kyrgyzstan, interlocutors generally found it difficult to describe women as having their own agency, and to analyse the gender dimension of processes of radicalisation culminating in violent extremism. Yet multiple conditions conducive to radicalisation exist for women and men, including feelings of insecurity and grievances against political, economic and social institutions.

UN SCR 2242 addresses the issue of radicalisation, but says nothing about religion itself, even though it is focused on countering violent extremism in a global context where ISIS is a prominent promoter of terrorism. In Kyrgyzstan, some have expressed concern that religiosity is growing and that there may be a link between nonviolent but seditious Islamist groups (like Hizb-ut-Tahir) and violent extremists. This was not corroborated by the GSPS report on religion which considered how increased religiosity in Kyrgyzstan is affecting women's equality and empowerment and ability to contribute to peace at the household, community and national level. The report found that religion offers women effective coping mechanisms in times of crisis, clear guidance for everyday life and the opportunity to re-negotiate their previous position in the family and community. Religion is at times also having a noticeably pacifying or calming effect on women's individual lives, and therefore contributing to peace on the micro household level. However, the research did not suggest that religion is supporting broader reconciliation and peace processes. Instead, divisions and low-level conflicts between proselytes, practising Muslims and atheists became evident.

In late 2015 Kyrgyzstan finalised a second 1325 NAP for 2016-2017 which incorporated those activities which had been committed to under the first NAP but had not yet been fully implemented. Development of a new NAP for 2018 onwards commenced in late 2017. Members of the working group in charge of NAP development are likely to use the GSPS research and

²² Add link to website

²³ Kyrgyzstan Counter-Terrorism Police (Tenth Unit) officer, November 24, 2016.

the data generated in designing new NAP interventions.

The GSPS aims to provide a substantial evidence base with regard to the nature of gender roles in present-day Kyrgyzstan and the ways in which these pose risks to women's empowerment and prevent them from full and meaningful participation in strengthening the country's security and reducing conflict. At the same time, the GSPS offers recommendations on how to take advantage of opportunities and existing strategies to strengthen women's equal participation and the protection of their rights.

This is based on the overall theory of change which was defined in the original project document and which stated, "If key state and non-state actors command firstly an informed understanding of risk factors to gender equality and conflict affecting women and girls; secondly, the capacity to understand shifting societal perceptions of gender relations; and thirdly the increasing tension between the latter and the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, then they will be able to design and implement effective interventions for ensuring the constitutional rights of women and men, because effective policy making requires a sound evidence base which will be provided."²⁴

²⁴ UN Women, UNFPA, and IOM project document, "Building the Evidence Base to Facilitate Responsive Gender Policy and Programs for Equality and Lasting Peace in Kyrgyzstan," to the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)/Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), 2014.

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SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

The Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), conducted from 2015 to 2017, was implemented using a multi-faceted methodology, including qualitative and quantitative research, and with the involvement of a large number of stakeholders at all stages of the design, background research, data collection, analysis, drafting, and dissemination phases. The GSPS not only sought to generate sorely needed data, policy and programmatic recommendations, but also to build the research capacities of the large number of experts, academics, activists, and government officials across all seven regions of Kyrgyzstan and the cities of Bishkek and Osh. KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) methodology was introduced to the country for the first time, and the necessary skills for gender responsive research, interviewing and analysis were strengthened.

The GSPS comprised of two linked but separately implemented research streams:

(1) a quantitative survey undertaken among 5,950 households throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. This work was implemented by the National Statistics Committee (NSC) of the Kyrgyz Republic and overseen by UNFPA. A detailed description of their methodology can be found in their separate report and in Appendix 2 of this one.

(2) Qualitative research involving some 1,729 respondents from throughout the country, who took part in in-depth interviews, case studies, focus group discussions, and participant observation. This research was implemented through UN Women, with the assistance of IOM and UNFPA. More detailed information on the qualitative methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

Through this research and its results, the GSPS programme overall aimed to strengthen efforts to empower women and girls and eliminate threats to gender equality through the clear identification of both 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 programmes.

Specifically, the GSPS aimed to achieve the following three outputs:

- Threats to gender equality and peace are identified in order to facilitate more gender responsive policy and programming;
- National institutional capacity in gender-sensitive data collection and analysis is strengthened;
- Gender-sensitive research capacity is strengthened among universities, state research institutions and other researchers.

GSPS quantitative and qualitative research focused on five primary research themes:

1. Violence against women and girls in relation to non-consensual marriage practices;
2. Women's religious practices and beliefs;
3. Women's economic empowerment;
4. Women's participation in labour migration;
5. Women's political participation.

These five topics were selected as problem areas in the country that could be addressed within the mandates of the study's implementing partners – namely the IOM, UNFPA, and UN Women – and in consultation with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Moreover, these topics were believed to represent major forces impacting Kyrgyzstani women's current opportunities for self-realisation and empowerment. A lack of reliable data on them had to date stymied efforts at policy and programme development by the government and UN agencies alike, and they thus seemed overdue for study.

The GSPS team was tasked with exploring the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of members of Kyrgyzstani society in relation to these five topics, with the overarching objective of “identifying key risk factors for gender inequality and threats for violence affecting women and girls”. Our specific objectives (in summary form) were to: (1) understand pressing interpersonal and structural issues leading to gender inequality, (2) understand community and society trends in gender perceptions and relations, and (3) understand the relationship between gender inequality and potential conflict-triggers. This report attempts to address these and other issues in brief, with more detailed analysis available in separate, topic-specific analyses.

The **GSPS qualitative research** entailed extensive desk research, research design, fieldwork, data analysis, policy reviews and consultations with stakeholders and experts.

Field work involved 18 researchers working with a total of 1,729 respondents over five months. The high number of respondents is in part due to our use of focus groups (FDGs), which were conducted throughout the county, for each research topic, and with men and women participating in separate groups. These FDGs had anywhere from four to ten participants (though most had six) who talked for two to three hours on various GSPS topics. Roughly 50% of all of the GSPS qualitative respondents, i.e. 859 people, participated in our study via these focus groups. Meanwhile, an additional 870 people participated in the GSPS via either in-depth interviews (433) or as part of family-oriented case studies (437).

Interviewees were not sought out randomly but based on their individual characteristics, life experiences, and knowledge – for example, for having experienced marriage as a child, started one’s own business, or converted to a minority faith (in academic terms: purposive sampling was used). As such, they were recruited primarily through GSPS team members’ contacts, civil society activists, and local government representatives. Focus groups were meant to explore general public perceptions of the topics under study and their participants were to the greatest extent possible recruited randomly. Where there were few volunteers, we leveraged local government and civil society contacts to help identify potential participants.

GSPS qualitative research was conducted in all nine administrative regions of the country: Bishkek and Osh cities, as well as the oblasts of Batken, Chui, Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Osh and Talas. In each of the seven oblasts and for each topic, we included research in the oblast capital as well as in at least one village; we also visited multiple neighbourhoods in both Bishkek and Osh cities. This distribution of research locations across cities, district capitals, and villages was designed to give us access to the voices of those in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas – and therefore to explore whether the type of settlement a person lives in impacts their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. We also tried to the greatest extent possible to attain respondents from minority ethnic groups and communities infrequently visited or served by international donors.

The overarching logic of this broad geographic reach was twofold: first, to elicit voices from across Kyrgyzstan’s numerous social, cultural, and economic sub-groups; second, to identify narratives and perspectives that may have been overlooked or underrepresented in previous research. For reasons of confidentiality, we do not list the specific villages or communities visited for our field research.

However, on the following page we show the distribution of our respondents across regions and type of settlement (i.e. urban, semi-urban, or rural). Prior to field research, research tools – i.e. a desk review report, semi-structured guides for interviews, case studies, and focus group discussions – were developed by a Research Working Group (RWG), comprised of 12 National Research Consultants (academics and experts analysts) and led by an international expert. The RWG developed methodology protocols, questionnaires and study guides for both the quantitative and qualitative research. A Stakeholders Advisory Group (SAG), comprised of a wide range of government and non-state stakeholders, including analysts from research institutions, experts and other actors, was consulted on the process of study implementation and endorsed the study materials.

Before the field work started, relevant capacity-building training sessions were provided, including on:

- Gender issues, GSPS, data collection field work (for NSC and FRT)
- The development of the analytical application and programme CPro (NSC)
- Data coding and analysis, on MaxQDA software (UN Women)
- Do-No-Harm interview techniques, victim-sensitive interviewing techniques, confidentiality, and secure data storage and management (IOM).

Each of the qualitative research field teams had Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek speakers among its members, so that interviews and focus groups could be conducted in the language(s) most comfortable for the respondent(s). The GSPS research also included discussions with members of additional minorities – Dungans, Tajiks, Uighers, etc.

For the **GSPS quantitative component**, UNFPA partnered with the National Statistics Committee (NSC) who involved 54 interviewers, 18 supervisors and 9 coordinators in the research. They surveyed around 6,000 households countrywide.

Field researchers and their supervisors were retained for analysing the GSPS data and elaborating findings and recommendations. Qualitative researchers spent a minimum of four months coding the massive amount of data collected via the field research and – with the help of MaxQDA data software – drawing connections across respondents, testing patterns and building theories, and inductively producing the results you see here. UNFPA/NSC had six Research Analysts and nine Operators analysing and processing the quantitative data, using the CPro program.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below were developed by the GSPS Principal Investigator, Quality Control Supervisors and Field Researchers, i.e. the core research team. These suggestions come from a researcher's perspective and not that of government officials, NGO leaders, or civil activists, who would ideally implement them. We thus frame these as suggestions in need of further development, elaboration, and experimentation prior to implementation. The publishing of key recommendations here does not mean that they are endorsed by the United Nations.

Violence against women and girls: early and forced marriage

1. Government and Parliament

Even though several pieces of important legislation have been passed in Kyrgyzstan to reduce early and forced marriage, implementation is slow and very few men and women are held accountable for taking part in the practices. To ensure a more comprehensive approach, the government should adopt a multi-sectoral national strategy to stop early and forced marriage, make financial resources available to implement it and monitor its progress. Within this strategy, resources should be allocated for the investigation, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators, as well as for the medical, psycho-social, legal and other services necessary to support the survivors of child and forced marriage

2. Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Agency for Local Governance

A responsibility gap exists at the level of local government regarding bride kidnapping and child marriage. Few village governments, police, school officials, aksakals or medical personnel see the prevention of and decrease in non-consensual marriage as their responsibility. Local government should be legislatively mandated to conduct anti-bride-kidnapping and anti-child-marriage initiatives in their communities and to commit budgetary resources for doing so. Law enforcement bodies, meanwhile, should be given manuals for the effective investigation of crimes against women and girls. Those communities that demonstrate the greatest rates of decline in these practices should receive public recognition, such as publicity in the national news and additional financing for their local budgets.

3. Mass media, civil society, and NGOs

Widespread misunderstandings about bride-kidnapping and child marriage, particularly in relation to their non-consensual nature, make light of

their detrimental impact and foster complacency on the part of government officials, activists, and local NGOs. Meanwhile, many victims of these practices perceive recourse to the justice system as pointless. Journalists and civil society activists should be encouraged to increase public awareness of the violent nature of these non-consensual marriages, to expose instances of official corruption that have impeded the vindication of women's rights, and to publicise cases where women have successfully litigated against their kidnappers.

Women's religious beliefs and practices:

1. Muftiat (a.k.a. Spiritual Admin. Of Kyrgyzstan (SMAK)), State Commission on Religion

Kyrgyzstani Muslim women, both devout and otherwise, face a lack of communal forums where they can practice or learn about their religion, and debate or elaborate its content. In this context, many come to fear Islam and view those who practice it as portending extremism and a loss of women's rights. At the same time, those attracted to religion but with little information to guide their spirituality are more vulnerable to extremist interpretations. Women urgently need open, easily accessible, well-informed sources of information on their religions, both to improve the national discourse on women's religiosity and to prevent the spread of radical ideologies. The Muftiat and State Commission on Religion should significantly expand opportunities for women to learn about Islam by: creating khutbah (sermons) specifically dedicated to women's issues and aired on public television; creating spaces for women's communal worship, staffed by trained, well-informed female leaders (especially in rural areas); working closely with informal female leaders in Muslim communities (both large and small) to inform women about both their religious and civic rights. This will be helped by the re-opening of the women's department of the Muftiat.

2. Government entities, mass media, and members of civil society and NGOs in the public sphere

The GSPS found that there is deep distrust between practising Muslims, women following more conservative forms of Islam and proselytes of other faiths. More opportunities should be made available for women to engage in inter-faith dialogue, and gain new awareness about religious freedom, religious faiths and practices. Meanwhile, members of the press, civil society, NGOs, and government leaders must take seriously their responsibility to properly inform the public and avoid casual stereotyping based on religious faith and practice.

3. Government entities

The GSPS study determined that some women are turning to Christian faiths as a coping mechanism against external shocks and stressors. While bonds with their new churches and communities may deepen their social capital, some proselytes suffer from marginalisation and stigmatisation by their former neighbours and co-workers. To ensure the protection of individual freedom of religion and belief, and non-discrimination for followers of “non-traditional” religious faiths, the state should ensure access to burial grounds, availability of religious literature and protection from hate crimes, in both law and practice.

Women’s economic empowerment:

1. Ministry of Finance, National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic

Many female borrowers are ill informed not only of their legal rights but also about the basics of credit. Basic information on financial literacy should be distributed in an easy-to-understand format and explained to borrowers before they take out loans and throughout the repayment process. This may best be achieved by a combination of initiatives: relevant courses in high school; government-supported training for micro-credit and bank officers, who in turn must explain this information to their clients; and brief infomercials on public television covering the basics of credit, including the risks.

2. NGOs and civil society

The burden of domestic labour is a major impediment to women’s economic advancement. Female

entrepreneurs are twice as likely as male entrepreneurs to close their businesses because of household and childcare responsibilities. While the GSPS research identified a plethora of beliefs that adults have internalised and which serve to rationalise and support this status quo, boys and girls in their early teens can still be sensitised to differential gender burdens and their detrimental effect on women. Pilot initiatives to test the potential for such programmes to succeed in Kyrgyzstan should be undertaken in one or two communities, then rolled out to a broader portion of society if successful. Meanwhile, UNFPA and its local partners – which run similar initiatives with elder teens in vocational education institutions – should assess the effectiveness of their existing programmes, identifying their success factors and remaining barriers, and use this information to develop programmes for younger teens, especially in areas where belief in traditional gender labour divisions remains strong.

Women’s involvement in labour migration:

1. Government entities, NGOs and civil society

Women face discrimination and violence as labour migrants, due to lack of knowledge of their rights and entitlements. The state should provide more advice and information to both potential and existing migrant workers to ensure that they know their rights and can access services including health care, social insurance, civil documentation (such as birth registration) and legal aid. This pre- and post-orientation should consider women migrant workers’ greater vulnerability to sexual abuse and trafficking, but without unduly restricting women’s migration experience to these aspects. At the same time, in bilateral discussions on labour migration management between Kyrgyzstan and host countries such as Russia, gender concerns, and the need to increase protection and services for migrant women, should be addressed. Within civil society, the creation of migrant women’s self-help groups, migrants’ associations and other non-governmental organisations assisting migrant women and their families should be facilitated.

2. Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Labour, Migration, and Youth

The children of female migrants suffer greatly in the absence of their mothers. This manifest itself not only through depression and apathy, but also in the deterioration of their schoolwork, personal cleanliness, and physical health. Direct social support to the children of migrants in terms of home visits by

medical and educational personnel, and sessions with (and training of) counsellors in state schools could help provide missing adult guidance, monitoring, and care. However, these extra burdens on teaching and medical staff should be properly financed and resourced. Meanwhile, support for fathers is urgently needed. Sessions on how men can speak openly with their children about their emotions; information on children's developmental needs at each major life stage (and how men can meet these needs); and publicity campaigns promoting and normalising the idea of men's active participation in their children's lives could all help men break out of their socially constructed roles to provide more direct support to their children. The UNFPA's "Happy Fatherhood Campaign", conducted in 2014 with the aim of involving men and boys in Talas Oblast in caregiving and childrearing, could serve as a roadmap, as could other father support programmes implemented in the region, such as those of ACEV in Turkey.

Women's political participation:

State authorities and parliament

The 2007 election law established 30% statutory quotas for women on party lists, as well as instituting a full proportional representation electoral system. But currently women hold only 19 of 120 seats in parliament and represent only about 10% of deputies in local councils. Special measures are needed at the

local level to ensure more women deputies in local councils. This includes access to campaign funding and training for women candidates. Even when women manage to enter the legislative or government they are almost always assigned responsibilities within the social sector. Hiring and promotion measures in government should help favour women in ministries where they are poorly represented, such as in security, agriculture and transportation.

Civil society, NGOs and media

Increasing women's political participation at the village level is particularly challenging: stereotypes of women's low leadership capacity and poor emotional control are common in Kyrgyzstan's small, tight-knit rural communities. Civil society organisations, NGOs and the media should highlight successful village-level female politicians, publicising their examples widely and describing the positive impacts they have had on their communities. Such female politicians could serve as mentors and be supported to lead workshops for female non-politicians and politicians alike on what a political career entails, how to build connections and run a campaign, how to design community policies and programmes, and how to find funding from local, national, and international donors. At the same time, media should be trained to assess how it portrays women candidates and those already in government.

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WORKS CITED

These are the works cited in this introduction only. Each pillar report has its own bibliography. An extensive literature review was carried out in preparation for the GSPS study.

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help of MaxQDA data software – drawing connections across respondents, testing patterns and building theories, and inductively producing the results you see here. UNFPA/NSC had six Research Analysts and nine Operators analysing and processing the quantitative data, using the CSPro program.

The qualitative researchers produced a final national survey results report in Fall 2016:
http://kyrgyzstan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GSPS_english.pdf

The findings of this survey report, and of the qualitative research, were used by five lead authors to prepare the GSPS final research reports on violence against women and girls; women's religious practices and beliefs; women's participation in labour migration; women's political participation; and women's economic empowerment, all published in 2017. The reports include analysis as well as policy recommendations.

Further details of GSPS quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are provided in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively.

Appendix A: Additional Description of Qualitative Methodology

The GSPS was conducted in three stages between April 2015 and July 2016:

Stage 1: Desk Review and Development of Initial Study Materials (April – August 2015)

Stage 1 began with a team – referred to as the Research Working Group (RWG) – of eight local researchers, one foreign researcher, and one national gender expert conducting background research on women's status and gender roles in the Kyrgyz Republic. The balance of international and national team members was designed to address GSPS's dual, somewhat opposing goals of generating high quality research while increasing the capacity of local researchers. The international researcher was envisioned as a mid-career professional who could train local professionals and guarantee the quality of their work; the local researchers and gender consultant, meanwhile, were expected to inform the foreign researcher's knowledge of Central Asia and the gender issues specific to it. But given difficulties finding appropriate applicants in both the international and national labour markets, a more junior foreign researcher (relative to initial plans) and more experienced national researchers (also relative to initial plans) were ultimately selected, creating a flatter team structure while still providing the benefit of cross-national knowledge sharing.

The RWG was tasked with writing a desk review report (DRR), the research protocol for the qualitative research, all of the qualitative research tools – i.e. interview, case study, and focus group discussion guides – and a quantitative questionnaire to be implemented by the NSC and UNFPA for a nationwide statistical survey. Work began with the DRR, as members of the RWG aimed to identify major gaps in the existing knowledge of Kyrgyzstani women's lives and gender roles, particularly regarding five topics pre-identified by the study's UN implementing partners (IOM, UNFPA, and UN Women). These five topics were: women's political participation, economic empowerment, religious beliefs and practices, violence against women and girls, and women's involvement in labour migration. The international consultant (i.e. foreign researcher) was in charge of directing and coordinating the team's work, elaborating cross-topic connections, and ensuring the quality of the topic-specific research reports written by RWG members. National researchers thus conducted topic-specific research and wrote

attendant reports, which the international consultant reviewed and commented on in two successive rounds. This system gave the international consultant a cross-topic perspective, which was shared with all RWG members in turn during group meetings and used to inform further DRR drafting. This desk review process culminated in the creation of a brief report recommending specific sub-topics for GSPS research.

The RWG next developed a research protocol for the qualitative research, using the findings from the DRR to inform its preliminary selection of the number and location of research sites, the number of participants and their characteristics (e.g. "female migrant," "man who bride kidnapped his wife," etc.), and to determine which research methods (i.e. interview, FGD, case study) to use for which topics and respondents. In general, focus groups were used for two purposes: (1) to gauge general public perceptions on GSPS topics, thereby providing context to NSC and UNFPA quantitative results, and (2) to engage specific sub-groups of the population in open discussion of an issue relevant to their lives and to the GSPS, such that we could better identify the contours of these groups' self-perceptions. Focus groups of the second variety included, for example, women who wear hijab: by asking them to speak in a group setting about the influence of the hijab on their lives, we were better able to draw out the similarities, distinctions, and contours of their opinions. Case studies were selected where the research focus was primarily on the family – i.e. the family dynamics of bride kidnapping and child marriage, or how women's international labour migration or political participation impacts their spouses and children. Finally, individual interviews were selected where the perspective of a specific group of women – such as female politicians, entrepreneurs, or labour migrants – was desired, and where we wanted to explore how differences in age, oblast, ethnicity, and other personal characteristics could inform these women's perspectives. Interviewing allowed us to collect deeper knowledge of the population under study while not being as resource-intensive as case studies, thereby giving us broader reach. As described at the outset of this report, locations were selected so as to be spread across oblasts, with rural and semi-urban areas covered in each (plus the urban areas of Bishkek and Osh). Respondents were selected for their individual experiences and to represent a wide range of socio-demographic characteristics (ethnicity, economic status, etc.) in order that we could elicit voices not previously heard on these topics.

It should be noted that the NSC and UNFPA, having extensive experience with quantitative research, used a pre-set methodology, which they apply to all nationwide surveys, for the GSPS. Consequently, they did not ask the RWG to produce a quantitative methodology. Thus, once the RWG had drafted the quantitative survey, it was handed to NSC experts to pilot, refine, and finalise. The NSC then implemented field research, conducted analysis, and undertook the drafting of its final report on the quantitative results according to its standard procedures. Quantitative and qualitative results were triangulated during the drafting and finalisation of the subsequent reports (as described in more depth in the next section).

A word on research scope is in order here. The GSPS was a study of massive proportions. Particularly for qualitative research, the number of respondents and breadth of their characteristics were considerable. Some qualitative researchers will question the value of this approach, citing qualitative research's primary benefit to be the intensive study of a small number of cases, and the insights derived there from. Others may point to the concept of "saturation", where the idea is that after a certain number of interviews, a researcher starts to hear the same opinions and concepts repeated. In such a context, continuing research post-saturation is then considered to be a waste of resources.

But the nature of the GSPS, its goals, and its resources counter all these arguments. First, the GSPS is in many ways a political tool. Its goal from the start was not simply to provide data, but to provide data of a sufficiently compelling nature that Kyrgyzstani leaders at national, oblast, and village levels would see its relevance to their respective domains. A deep study of migrant families in Jalal-Abad – while useful – would do little to inform the authorities in Naryn or Issyk-Kul oblasts about migrant families' lives in their locales, or to convince them that issues identified in Jalal-Abad may have some relevance for their own policies. Generating sufficient data to make the GSPS results politically relevant thus required nationwide reach, demanding a concomitantly high number of respondents as a result. Moreover, the RWG was tasked with selecting research topics to cover all of the three implementing partners' mandates (i.e. IOM's, UNFPA's, and UN Women's mandates, covering migration, women's reproductive health and rights, and women's empowerment, respectively). Thus, by its very nature – its status as a study of three UN implementing partners with an orientation towards informing domestic policy – the scope of the GSPS had to be topically as well as geographically broad.

Second, the GSPS benefitted from more financial and institutional support than most qualitative studies receive. And with that came, in the researchers' eyes, responsibilities to explore topics that otherwise rarely receive sufficient funding and to collect data on such topics that could be used as a basis for further, future work. The GSPS team was greatly helped in these aims by the logistical support (such as pre-arranged transportation to research sites and funding for accommodation), financial support (most directly relevant in terms of being able to hire a large team of experienced, trusted field researchers for an extended period of time), and research support (in terms of the addition of experts as needed and the purchase of data analysis software) of the UN Women office in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, there were sufficient financial and institutional resources to realise the GSPS's broad scope and ambitious goals.

The RWG submitted its completed desk review report, research protocol, and research tools (i.e. all qualitative tools plus the quantitative survey) in July 2015 and concluded its work. Though RWG members were invited to participate in the next stage of the GSPS – namely field research – most had pre-existing employment with local universities, the government, or NGOs and were thus unable to join, given the extensive amount of travel and time away from Bishkek foreseen for respondent interviews.

Stage 2: Refining, Piloting and Conducting Field Research (August 2015 – March 2016)

Stage 2 entailed refinement of research materials in preparation for fieldwork as well as the fieldwork itself. Qualitative research tools were substantially altered and improved during this phase, first by two national research consultants hired specifically for this task, then via feedback from all relevant government and UN stakeholders, next by the Principal investigator, and finally by the field research teams via piloting. As this suggests, the RWG's qualitative research tools were extensively elaborated upon during stage 2; time pressure during stage 1 had left the tools under-developed, thus the need for further improvement.

For GSPS qualitative research, a single round of piloting was conducted either in or around Bishkek for each research tool. These piloting exercises aimed to improve the quality of the study materials, identify questions that were poorly phrased or ill conceived, and determine whether additional research topics should be considered. Though this piloting led to significant improvements in the materials, the GSPS

would have benefited from more extensive piloting (three rounds) conducted in all expected research areas (i.e. in all nine administrative regions of the country). Several questions and lines of study were found to be poorly understood by respondents or unproductive during the field research; at the same time, by reflecting on which questions these were, our researchers identified points of cultural difference among themselves, the research subjects, and the UN agencies implementing the study. Such information is in many ways a useful research outcome in and of itself. At the end of the piloting process, final versions of all materials were prepared in Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, and English.

Twelve field researchers (FRs) with experience in qualitative research were hired and trained from November to December 2015. Training was led by GSPS Quality Control Supervisors (QCSs) - leading national researchers who were hired to oversee the field process and ensure the quality of gathered data. This training entailed an introduction to the GSPS itself, as well as detailed review of the research tools and practice sessions on interviewing, leading focus groups, and dealing with psychological challenges that can arise during interviews. This entire process was overseen by the Principal Investigator and Project Coordinator, who were in charge of ensuring overall study quality, assessing and improving the direction of the research as necessary, and coordinating all logistical and financial needs.

Field research was conducted from December 2015 to March 2016. Each of the five research topics - women's involvement in labour migration, political participation, religious practices and beliefs, subjection to non-consensual marriage, and economic empowerment - was researched sequentially in the order listed above. The length of fieldwork per topic varied from two to six weeks, depending on the number of respondents and difficulty in accessing them (see individual component reports for further details). FRs travelled in teams of four to each research location. A single FR led each interview, while FGDs were led by both a moderator and an assistant; both were conducted in either Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian, or a mix of these languages, depending on respondents' needs and preferences. FRs attained oral consent from all participants before beginning research-related discussions; the process of attaining informed consent was audio recorded to ensure full compliance with these ethical standards.

To help review and ensure the quality of all collected data, interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded,

nightly FR debriefing sessions were held, QCSs reviewed a random selection of the audio files, and QCSs made bi-weekly visits to the research teams in the field (or in some cases stayed embedded with the team for the entire research period). QCSs supplied weekly reports to the Principal Investigator and Project Coordinator, detailing any challenges, research needs, and initial observations from the fieldwork. The Principal Investigator continued to refine the research tools, questions, and methodology as necessary, in response to FR and QCS feedback from the field.

Stage 3: Data Transcription, Analysis, and Presentation

Beginning in February 2016, audio files from GSPS field research were transcribed by the research firm M-Vector. All recordings of interview, FGD, and (most) FR debriefing sessions were transcribed. For the particularly sensitive research topics of (i) women's religious practices and beliefs and (ii) women's subjection to non-consensual marriage, participants' names and village names were replaced with privacy codes (made of computer-generated strings of randomised numbers and letters). Transcript titles and content were overwritten with these privacy codes to better protect respondents' data.

GSPS qualitative data was analysed with the aid of MaxQDA - a software package developed to aid qualitative researchers in organising, understanding, and visualising their work. The Principal Investigator provided QCSs and FRs with a week-long training on MaxQDA in early March, after which the research group was split into five teams of three (one QCS and two FRs) to analyse each of the five GSPS research topics separately. Transcripts were uploaded to MaxQDA and codes developed to identify and categorise various sub-topics of the data, as well as to draw cross-transcript connections. The development of all codes, coding-related memos, analytical categories, and eventual research conclusions was inductive, meaning that it was built up out of the data rather than imposed upon it. As such, GSPS analytical teams did not start with a set list of codes or concepts to apply to the data; rather, they developed these codes and concepts through the process of reviewing the transcripts and building analytical findings.

Review and analysis of content began by simply reading the transcripts. For each research topic, each transcript was read by at least one member of the research team; i.e. all transcripts were reviewed and used to inform the team's analytical conclusions. Coding in MaxQDA proceeded with a focus on

transcript content that was directly relevant to GSPS research questions, that provided new or insightful ideas relevant to the research questions, or that provided basic (and necessary) socio-demographic information on the participants. Though we did not quantify exactly how much of the data corpus ultimately had a code applied to it, we planned to code roughly 30% to 40% of all transcript content and believe that we met this expectation. Content not coded includes: GSPS interviewer and moderator questions and statements (some 30 % to 40% of transcript content), repetitive statements by respondents, or tangents without relevance to GSPS subjects. Some transcripts were coded extensively and multiple times given the depth of their content. Others were barely coded at all, especially where respondents gave only “yes” or “no” answers.

QCSs built on their team’s coding work to write final analytical reports for their five respective research topics. Once the qualitative data had been analysed and topic reports drafted, the results of the quantitative data (derived from the National Statistics Committee and UNFPA 5,950 household survey) was

reviewed, cross-checked, and incorporated into the QCSs’ final reports. Any inconsistencies between qualitative and quantitative findings were noted, possible reasons for these differences explored, and where appropriate notes and changes to the final topic reports were made. These reports were completed in September 2016, to be shared with the GSPS Stakeholder’s Advisory Group, consisting of interested government, NGO, and civil society leaders.

One of the primary goals of the GSPS was to inform government and NGO policy and programming. To that end, experts with a detailed understanding of Kyrgyz legislative and bureaucratic regimes were hired for each of the five GSPS research themes. In September 2016, these experts met with GSPS QCSs, the Principal Investigator, the Project Coordinator, and government and NGO officials for a two-day workshop oriented toward translating GSPS findings into actionable legislative and programmatic initiatives. QCSs and NSC representatives presented on the integrated qualitative and quantitative results, after which policy experts took the lead in framing workshop discussions. Their final recommendations

Overview of GPS Qualitative Research Methods by research instrument and number of participants (by gender)				
	Number of research activities conducted	Female participants	Male participants	Total participants
VAWG: Non-Consensual Marriage Practices				
Case studies	53	165	101	266
In-depth interviews	101	48	53	101
FGDs	0	0	0	0
VAWG Total	104	213	154	367
Women's Religious Beliefs and Practices				
Case studies	0	0	0	0
In-depth interviews	196	161	35	196
FGDs	45	220	110	330
WRBP Total	241	381	145	526
Women's Economic Empowerment				
Case studies	10	13	14	27
In-depth interviews	51	50	1	51
FGDs	26	78	82	160
WEE Total	87	141	97	238
Women's Participation in Labour Migration				
Case studies	18	30	38	68
In-depth interviews	51	45	6	51
FGDs	27	155	80	235
WPLM Total	96	230	124	354
Women's Political Participation				
Case studies	10	20	26	46
In-depth interviews	64	64	0	64
FGDs	18	70	64	134
WPP Total	92	154	90	244

Appendix B: Quantitative Methodology

1.1 Purpose and scope of the survey

The purpose of the "Gender in Society Perceptions Study" 2015-2016 was to collect a significant credible evidence base on a range of issues - political participation, economics, business, religious beliefs and practices, migration, early marriage and bride abduction at the community level - that pose risks to the empowerment of women and their participation in conflict resolution.

The "Gender in Society Perception Study" was a nationwide sample survey, being representative at the national and regional levels (seven regions and the cities of Bishkek and Osh) and with breakdown by type of area (urban / rural).

Target groups of the survey are women and men aged 18 years and older, living in households. The survey did not include citizens residing in special institutions, such as nursing homes for the elderly and persons with health disabilities, or those held in prisons.

For the effective implementation of the project, an interagency working group was established, composed of representatives of the key ministries, NGOs and international organisations, scientists and experts. The Working Group participated in the workshop where the sampling model, questionnaire and survey plan were discussed, finalised and approved.

1.2 Questionnaire

During the household survey, a questionnaire developed by an interagency working group was used (Appendix E). The survey was conducted in the Kyrgyz or Russian language, taking into account the preferences of the respondents.

The Questionnaire consisted of eight sections: Section "A" included questions related to the definition of kinship, marital status, education and ethnicity of household members aged 15 years and older; Section "B" defined the employment status of household members aged 15 years and older; Section "C" aimed to determine the level of wealth and asset ownership (subjective welfare level, housing and land ownership); Section "E" included questions about decision-making on revenue and expenditure, employment and distribution of gender roles, as well as micro lending and entrepreneurial activity; Section "R" aimed to identify the religious beliefs and practices of the respondents; Section "F" was devoted to

marriage practices, including early marriage and bride abduction; Section "G" contained questions on the participation of men and women in politics; Section "M" aimed to research migration and its impact on migrants' religious beliefs.

1.3 Sample generation and interviewing method

The main objective of the sample generation was to obtain a statistically reliable assessment of the opinions of women and men aged 18 years and older at the national level, with breakdown by urban and rural areas and across the nine regions of the country. In the process of generating the sample, the population of each region (Batken, Chui, Jalal-Abad, Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Talas and Osh regions, and the cities of Bishkek and Osh) was split into two strata - urban and rural. The multistage cluster sampling with stratification was used for generation of the sample frame for this survey.

The sample frame received for the survey "Gender in Society Perceptions Study" in the Kyrgyz Republic covered 6,000 households. Early marriage (under 18 years) was used as a key indicator to determine the sample size. The following formula was used for this indicator to assess the required sample size:

$$n = \frac{4 \times r \times (1-r) \times \text{deff}}{(\text{RME} \times r)^2 \times \bar{p} \times \bar{n} \times \text{RR}}$$

Where:

n - The required sample size, expressed as the number of households for the key indicator;

4 - The indicator for achieving appropriate level of confidence of 95%;

r - Forecast or estimated index expressed as the ratio;

RR - Rate of non-response;

deff - Design effect of the indicator;

RME - The reasonable margin of error at 95% confidence level;

p - The proportion in total population, on which the indicator r is based;

\bar{n} - The average household size (number of household members).

The following assumptions were made during calculations: r (rate of early marriage before 18 years old) - 13%. The value of deff (design effect) - 1.5, p (percentage of women aged 20-49 in the general population) - 21.9%, and the average household size was 4.5 based on the sampling frame, RME - 0.25. The estimated response rate is 98%. The number of households - 665 for each region - a total of 5,985 households for the nine regions (7 regions and the cities of Bishkek and Osh).

The number of households in one cluster for the

survey was 15, based on indicators of the design effect, budget, and time of the field works. In total, 400 clusters were selected for the survey.

In each region, the clusters (primary sampling units) were distributed between urban and rural areas in proportion to the size of the urban and rural populations in that region. The initial sample was adjusted in two cases. Firstly, the sample was

increased by six clusters in the Jalal-Abad region, and reduced by the same number of clusters in the city of Osh. On the one hand, this was due to the fact that the Jalal-Abad region is a large and diverse region, while the city of Osh is much more homogeneous. Secondly, distribution between urban and rural areas in the Osh region was adjusted by increasing the urban sample by three clusters and reducing the rural one. Table 3.1 shows distribution of clusters in the sampling strata.

1. Distribution of clusters with breakdown by regions

	Total number of clusters		
	Total	Urban area	Rural area
Total	400	166	234
Region			
Batken	45	13	32
Jalal-Abad	50	16	34
Issyk-Kul	45	16	29
Naryn	45	10	35
Osh	45	8	37
Talas	43	9	34
Chui	45	12	33
Bishkek city	44	44	-
Osh city	38	38	-

The 2009 Census data were used as a basis for selection of the clusters. The enumeration areas of the census were selected as primary sampling units (PSUs), which were selected in each strata using systematic PPS-selection (selection with probability proportional to size) based on the number of households in each enumeration area from the materials of the Census of Population and Housing 2009.

Sampling was made in two stages. At the first stage, the required number of enumeration areas in urban and rural strata in each of the seven regions and two cities were selected. At the second stage, within the selected enumeration areas (clusters) lists of households were generated and 15 households were selected from each cluster using systematic method.

Since the sampling frame (Census of Population and

Housing 2009) is not the latest, a new list of households was generated for selecting households across all selected enumeration areas. For this purpose, teams were formed to compile the lists, and these teams visited each enumeration area and prepared lists of all households based on the location map.

To ensure representativeness, the sample was weighted. Probability weightings were calculated at each stage of the selection process and used in calculating the results of the survey; this ensured that each response was taken into account in the final value in accordance with the proportional distribution. The probability weightings were adjusted taking into account non-response factors and official population statistics. The main component of weight is the reciprocal value of a sample proportion, which is multiplication of probability of selecting the first level units (clusters) by the second level units (households).

Probability in sampling was calculated using the following formulas:

$$\text{Prob1} = \frac{\text{Number of selected clusters}}{\text{Number of households in the strata}} * \frac{\text{Number of households in the cluster}}{\text{Number of households in the strata}}$$

$$\text{Prob2} = \frac{\text{Number of selected households in the cluster}}{\text{Number of households in the cluster}}$$

(separately by each property)

Total weight is calculated using the formula: $1 / (\text{Prob1} * \text{Prob2})$.

After completion of the field works, response rates for each selected strata were calculated and were taken into account in adjusting the final sample weights.

The information about estimation of sampling errors is in Appendix C.

1.4 Listing

Listing was made in October-November 2015 and covered 400 clusters. A 1.5-day training for 45 listers and cartographers was held as preparation for listing. The training covered work with the census portfolios, filling the lister's profiles, preparation of schematic maps, and specifics of household census. At the time of the listing, all household clusters were informed about the survey, which greatly improved access for interviewers to households. The listing was made in teams (two cartographers and two enumerators). In order to ensure access to the households, each lister had a support letter from the Chairman of the KR National Statistics Committee.

1.5 Preliminary survey (pretest)

A preliminary survey (pretest) was conducted among 40 households prior to the main field works, to test the questionnaire, determine views and see how women and men understood the questions, to check the quality of the translation of the questionnaire into the Kyrgyz language and the likely duration of the interview. The pretest was conducted in the central and residential areas of Bishkek.

According to the results of the pilot survey, the Russian and Kyrgyz language questionnaires were improved, and the workload and the total number of interviewers were determined depending on the interview duration.

1.6 Training supervisors and interviewers

The field staff (regional coordinators, supervisors, interviewers) was collected on the basis of their experience of conducting household surveys. The main training was held for all field staff in December 2015, with refresher training being organised before the actual start of the field work in February 2016. The training programme covered the following issues: specificity of gender studies; survey methodology; procedure for completing the questionnaire and interviewers documents; respondent selection procedure; work with maps and samples; standard confidentiality of the gender related surveys; psychological aspects of interviewing; characteristics of surveying respondents on sensitive topics; use of cards; control procedures and requirements for the interviewer's quality of work; appearance and safety of the interviewer. Training sessions were conducted using interactive methods, including work in small groups and role plays.

Each field worker was provided with specifically developed guidance for interviewers to collect data, which included all issues covered by the training programme.

1.7 Field works

There were 81 employees involved in undertaking the field work: 54 interviewers, 18 supervisors 9, region

coordinators from the heads of territorial departments of the state statistical bodies. Among recruited staff, 78% were women, and 22% men.

Field works were conducted simultaneously in all regions of the country from 24 February 2016 to 31 March 2016.

A total of 5,950 households were surveyed, with 16,145 members aged 15 years old and above, including 8,469 women and 7,676 men.

1.8 Data control

A multilevel control system was used during data collection and processing. During the collection phase, the regional supervisor implemented daily control of the fieldwork by interviewers, checking each completed questionnaire for correctness of household selection, completeness of questions and correctness of paperwork. When errors were detected, additional data was collected during repeated visits to the household.

During the fieldwork, specifically trained inspectors implemented external monitoring of the survey quality, including repeated visits to households, validation and selection of the household respondents, accuracy and completeness of filling in questionnaires, duration of the interviews, and respondents' feedback on the quality of the interviewers' work. In total, more than 5% of the questionnaires were checked in each region. Information about identified errors was promptly disseminated by telephone to all supervisors in order to prevent similar mistakes in other regions. The next level of control over the questionnaires was implemented in the course of coding and entering into the database.

1.9 Data processing

Data were processed centrally. In parallel with the data entry, a statistical task for the production of output tables was formulated. More than 100 analytical tables were developed on all sections of the questionnaire.

The data entry program was developed on a specialized CPro package; it allowed for arithmetic and logical control of the data, as well as checking for completeness and duplication of data. The data entry operators were trained to use the data entry program. Data entry, cleaning and generation of output tables were conducted from 1 April to 25 May 2016.

Data quality control tables are in Appendix D.

1.10 Defining living standards of households

Welfare level was defined as quintile²⁵ of income per capita. Households had the following sources of income:

Wages;

Income from farming / agribusiness (agriculture, livestock, agro-processing);

Income from activities not related to farming (shop etc.), services (transportation, tutoring, babysitting, etc.);

Self-employment, not associated with farming activities (hand-made products - carpets, toshoks, carving wood and other);

Income from subsidiary farming;

Pensions / scholarships / grants;

Income from lease of land, house, equipment, personal property, private lending;

Remittances from household members and relatives, who were in labour migration abroad or in the country (transfers);

Gifts and other income.

The first income quintile is characterised by the minimum income of 20% of the poorest households, and the fifth level by the income of 20% of the richest households.

²⁵ The surveyed households were ranked based level of household income and were split into five equal parts (quintiles) starting from the lowest (poorest), and ending with the highest (richest).

Appendix C: GSPS Team Members – Qualitative Research

Gerald Gunther	UN Women Representative in the Kyrgyz Republic	Alisher Khamidov	National Consultant, Research Working Group
Diana Mamatova	Project Coordinator	Aijarkyn Kojobekova	National Consultant, Research Working Group
Aigerim Toktogulova	Project Assistant	Asel Myrzabekova	National Consultant, Research Working Group
Sabine Freizer	UN Women Regional advisor on Governance Peace and Security	Mehrigiul Ablezova	National Consultant, Research Working Group
Meghan McCormack	Principal Investigator	Nina Bagdasarova	National Consultant, Research Working Group
Elyor Nematov	Documentary Photographer	UN Women team who provided feedback and comments to the research instruments and GSPS Pillar Reports:	
Nurgul Esenamanova	Quality Control Supervisor	Corneliu Eftodi	Programme Officer, UN Women Moldova
Mirgul Karimova	Quality Control Supervisor	Jipara Turmamatova	Programme Manager, UN Women Kyrgyzstan (Economics pillar)
Elena Kim	Quality Control Supervisor/ National Research Analyst on Migration	UNFPA team who provided feedback and comments to the research instruments and GSPS Pillar Reports:	
Asel Murzakulova	Quality Control Supervisor	Meder Omurzakov	Assistant Representative
Nurgul Ukueva	Quality Control Supervisor	Nora Suyunalieva	Programme Associate
Aikokol Maksutova	National Research Analyst on Religion	IOM team who provided feedback and comments to the research instruments and GSPS Pillar Reports:	
Nargiza Abdurahman k.	Field Researcher	Bermet Moldobaeva	CT Programme Coordinator for Central Asia, Head of Office
Diana Asanalieva	Field Researcher	Nurbek Omurov	National Programme Officer, IOM/The UN Migration Agency in Kyrgyzstan
Gulmairam Attokurova	Field Researcher	Jyldyz Ahmetova	Senior Programme Assistant, IOM/The UN Migration Agency in Kyrgyzstan
Bektemir Bagyshkulov	Field Researcher	Antoine Chandonnet	Consultant, IOM/The UN Migration Agency in Kyrgyzstan
Aikol Bolotbekova	Field Researcher		
Aiymbubu Dzhaparkulova	Field Researcher		
Baktigul Kapalova	Field Researcher		
Elnura Kazakbaeva	Field Researcher		
Gulzhan Niiazalieva	Field Researcher		
Rimma Sultanova	Field Researcher		
Rustam Ulukov	Field Researcher		
Zarina Urmanbetova	Field Researcher		
Jamal Frontbek kyzy	Gate keeper		
Zharkyn Omurbekova	Researcher		
Madina Kasymova	Researcher		
Aida Tynychbekova	Researcher		
Chinara Esengul	National Consultant, Research Working Group		
Galina Gorborukova	National Consultant, Research Working Group		
Larisa Ilibezova	National Consultant, Research Working Group		
Altyn Kapalova	National Consultant, Research Working Group		

Appendix D. List of Employees Involved in the Survey

Survey Management

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic:

Akylbek Sultanov	Chairman
Kulipa Koichumanova	Advisor to the Chairman
Lyuksina Tekeeva	Vice-chairperson
Elvira Isenkulova	Project Manager
Rimma Chynybaeva	Head of Division for Social and Demographic Statistics and Labor Market
Jyldyz Rakhmanova	Head of the Department for Social Statistics in the Division for Socio-Demographic Statistics and Labor Market

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

Meder Omurzakov	Assistant Representative
Nora Suyunaliyeva	Programme Associate
Jeenbekova Nazira	Administrative and Financial Assistant

National Consultants for the Survey

Larisa Ilibezova	National Consultants for the Survey
Gulhumar Abdullayeva	National Consultants for the Survey

Analytical report development group

Gulmira Sulaimanova	Report Analyst
Lyudmila Torgasheva	Report Analyst
Nina Bagdasarova	Report Analyst
Larisa Praslova	Report Analyst
Zulfiya Kochorbaeva	Report Analyst
Eugenia Karpovich	Report Analyst

Consultants for Statistical Domains

Tamara Taipova	Consultant for Statistical Domains
Chynara Turdubaeva	Consultant for Statistical Domains

The National Statistical Committee

Data Processing Specialist:

Larisa Praslova

IT support:

Ravil Khanov, Azamat Adamaliev, Bolot Sulaymanov, Azamat Tenizbaev, Ramil Makeev

Regional Coordinators for Field Works:

Ulan Iskatov, Issyk-Kul region
Zhandaraly Sadyraliev, Jalal-Abad region
Kydyrgych Akmatov, Naryn region
Myrzahmat Ergeshov, Batken region
Azizbek Rysbaev, Osh region
Svetlana Satkanalieva, Talas region
Almaz Shakulov, Chui region
Koshoy Isaliev, Bishkek city
Torobek Amatov, Osh city

Field staff:

Jalal-Abad region

Nurbek Kannazarov, supervisor
Ideyat Bektasheva, interviewer
Tilek Baktybekov, interviewer
Tolgonai Tazhibaeva, interviewer
Tologon Mamatkulov, interviewer
Bolot Ibraimov, interviewer
Mirbek Eshenkulov, interviewer
Asylbek Kozhonov, supervisor

Batken Oblast

Barahathon Baybubaeva, supervisor
Maharam Rahmanzhanova, supervisor
Rahmat Akmatov, interviewer
Rahima Baybubaeva, interviewer
Parida Gaparova, interviewer
Shahzada Saitova, interviewer
Gulzat Nurmatova, interviewer
Batirzhon Turakulov, interviewer

Chui region

Nurlan Shakulov, supervisor
Saltanat Muratbekova, supervisor
Aigul Toktosunova, interviewer
Gulsana Omorova, interviewer
Nazira Japarova, interviewer
Cholpon Shatenova, interviewer
Zhazgul Imanova, interviewer
Aisuluu Momylbaeva, interviewer

Talas region

Gulnara Sadimova, supervisor
Kuban Toktorbaev, supervisor
Altyngul Sabirbaeva, interviewer
Uulzhan Imanalieva, interviewer
Zulayka Kasymova, interviewer
Nurzan Nazaraliev, interviewer
Ainura Tursunova, interviewer
Medetbek Kabyzbekov, interviewer

Osh region

Cholponay Adanova, supervisor
Turdygul Tokhtarova, supervisor
Ayzirek Murzarahim kyzy, interviewer
Muyassarhan Hamdamova, interviewer
Aida Joldosheva, interviewer
Zhumagul Bekmuratova, interviewer
Samara Muratbek kyzy, interviewer
Edilbek Mamatilla uulu, interviewer

Naryn region

Zhazgul Moldokabylova, supervisor
Gulmira Orozbayeva, supervisor
Ainura Naamatova, interviewer
Zhumagul Shabdanova, interviewer
Karlygach Kanymetova, interviewer
Nestan-Darezhan Kachaganova, interviewer
Nurperizathanbugul Almazbekova, interviewer
Aigul Abdykerimova, interviewer

Osh city

Nurzat Egemberdieva, supervisor
Marhabahan Karimova, supervisor
Aygerim Kamchybekova, interviewer
Ayeles Shakirova, interviewer
Turdukan Artykova, interviewer
Nazgul Shakirova, interviewer
Aygerim Abdykayymova, interviewer
Saparmurat Muktaraliev, interviewer

Bishkek city

Anarkul Saynidinova, supervisor
Aisuluu Kaparova, supervisor
Tolgonai Maatova, interviewer
Sabira Temirova, interviewer
Nazira Djumagulova, interviewer
Azim Maatov, interviewer
Aykanysh Keneshova, interviewer
Kachkynbaeva Ainura, interviewer

Issyk-Kul region

Toktorbek Bayamanov, supervisor
Taalaikul Bakasheva, interviewer
Nur Sultankulova, interviewer
Asel Temirbekova, interviewer
Meerim Kaptagaeva, interviewer
Fatyina Kadyrova, interviewer
Baktygul Sydykova, interviewer

Coding and Data Entry Staff:

Larissa Kobtsova
Aigerim Moldokanova
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Salamat Nurgozhoeva
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Zarina Kaparova
Meerim Kuzdobaeva
Chingiz Abdykaimov
Nurjan Taalaybekova
Baktygul Abdykerimova
Zamira Berzhibaeva
Meerim Erkinbek kyzy
Clara Kaldybaeva

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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