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Gender Scoping Study

Prepared in the framework of the “Bai Alai” – Small and Medium Enterprise Development Programme in Alai and Chon-Alai





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Research team:

Gulnara Ibraeva – expert analyst
Mehrigiul Ablezova – methodologist
Anastasia Danshina – supervisor
Asel Myrzabekova – researcher
Aikokul Arzieva – researcher
Parizat Jumanalieva – researcher
Saltanat Midin kyzy – researcher



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INTRODUCTION

Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the key challenges for contemporary strategies and development practice at national and local level in Kyrgyzstan.

Defining empowerment as “a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability”, the leading theorist of gender equality and empowerment Naila Kabeer defines several types of empowerment: educational, economic, political and legal.¹ Studying the practice of women's empowerment in various parts of the world Kabeer and other experts – C. Moser, A. Pascal, et al. – state that for rural women the path to empowerment lies through uniting their efforts and interests, and creating a common space of action for changes in patriarchal communities and societies with dramatic gender inequality and injustice. In addition, an important role is played by assistance from donor organisations and development agencies that consider the concepts of development and progress critically and take into account local culture and gender order.

The “Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Alai and Chon-Alai districts of the Osh Oblast” programme (Bai Alai) that is currently being implemented by Helvetas in consortium with Aga Khan Foundation is an example of gender-sensitive planning aimed at long-term poverty reduction, alleviation of inequality between rural and urban areas, and improvement of employment opportunities, especially among youth and women. The programme is based on experience of project implementation and in-depth market and context analysis, applying the M4P approach as well as women's economic empowerment (WEE). The programme aims to reduce poverty in two districts by increasing income and self-employment, in particular for women and youth. This will be achieved by facilitating the rise of local and regional markets, and thereby reducing inequalities and improving perceptions of life prospects. The programme focuses on three components:

- 1) The livestock sector: cattle and other livestock; cashmere; poultry for egg production;
- 2) Local economic development: facilitating and responding to initiatives from women and youth to establish businesses that broaden the range of products and services offered in the target region, primarily in (i) roadside businesses, hospitality and tourism, (ii) other specific women- and youth-led/-oriented Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and (iii) machinery services;
- 3) Knowledge management and communication: this component is composed of various sub-components including Knowledge Management, Action Research, and Monitoring and Evaluation, all of which are related to communications to a great extent.

Through action research the programme gains in-depth knowledge about changes occurring in communities and draws lessons from the experience of implementation. These will be used to further develop strategies and interventions and even to make policy recommendations.

This study may be considered a piece of action research that aims to study the dynamics of gender relations in Alai and Chon Alai rayons and determine the most problematic issues with regard to promoting gender equality and economic empowerment.

¹ Kabeer N. 1994 *Reversed realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. Verso, pp-85-87; Pascal, Amanda. *Measuring Women's Empowerment Projects: The case of Armenia*. 2012.

Based on the study findings, this report describes gender issues in the practice of poverty alleviation and in local economic development and entrepreneurship.

The report seeks to transcend the boundaries of common and stereotypical notions of women's victimization, prevalence of discriminatory practices in relation to women, and limited resources for women's empowerment, and describe aspects of the daily lives of rural women in the studied villages in terms of:

- gender division of labour in livestock, farming and unpaid care work;
- women's and men's relative access to resources, services, and markets;
- power relations and decision-making processes within households on expenditure and other key issues; and
- the likely impact of all these on programme activities.

The findings and recommendations presented in the report will help to further define strategies for women's economic empowerment, and will also provide a "snapshot" of trends in the gender order in the studied communities in transition.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in four selected villages in Alai and Chon-Alai rayons of Osh oblast in Kyrgyzstan. Two villages were selected in both rayons: one near the rayon centre and the other an isolated village. Thus we selected Kolduk and Sary-Mogol villages in Alai rayon and Daroot-Korgon and Shibe villages in Chon-Alai rayon. The profiles of the selected villages are provided in the next section of the report.

The research included analysis of both secondary data, collected during the baseline assessment of women's empowerment in Bai-Alai, and of primary qualitative data that we generated during the fieldwork. The following qualitative research methods were used in the study:

- Desk research;
- Semi-structured participant observation in the four villages;
- Four focus group discussions (two in each rayon); and
- Case studies.

1. Desk research

The desk research involved gathering existing data on the factors affecting the economic empowerment of women and households in Alai and Chon-Alai rayons of Osh oblast in Kyrgyzstan. As part of the desk research, we analysed data collected during the programme's baseline survey. Analysis of these data provided a general picture of gender and programmatic issues. More specifically, we analysed data on gender division of labour, gender distribution of time budgets, access to formal education, skills training and extensions for improved productivity and incomes, as well as gender aspects of the role of children in agriculture and livestock production. In addition to secondary analysis of baseline survey data, we also examined other documents produced by Helvetas and its partners, including a series of subsector reports and the reports on Skilled Labour, Vocational Education & Training, and Migration, among others.

2. Semi-structured participant observation in the pilot villages

Semi-structured participant observation involves the immersion of researchers in the studied environment and the examination of everyday life practices in order to obtain in-depth, qualitative data relating to the research topic. In particular, in this study we examined the following aspects of life in the programme's pilot villages:

- The influence on involvement in programme activities of factors such as gender division of labour and workload, access to resources, services and markets, and power relationships in the household;
- The degree of inclusion of women in marketing or processing cooperatives and community projects;
- Informal women's networks in the area and how the programme may build on them; and
- The specific problems of female-headed households (households where females either formally or informally are the heads).

Semi-structured observations were carried out in the four selected villages in Alai and Chon-Alai rayons. A team of researchers spent 3-4 days in each village. A total of 14 units of analysis were gathered based on observation protocol.

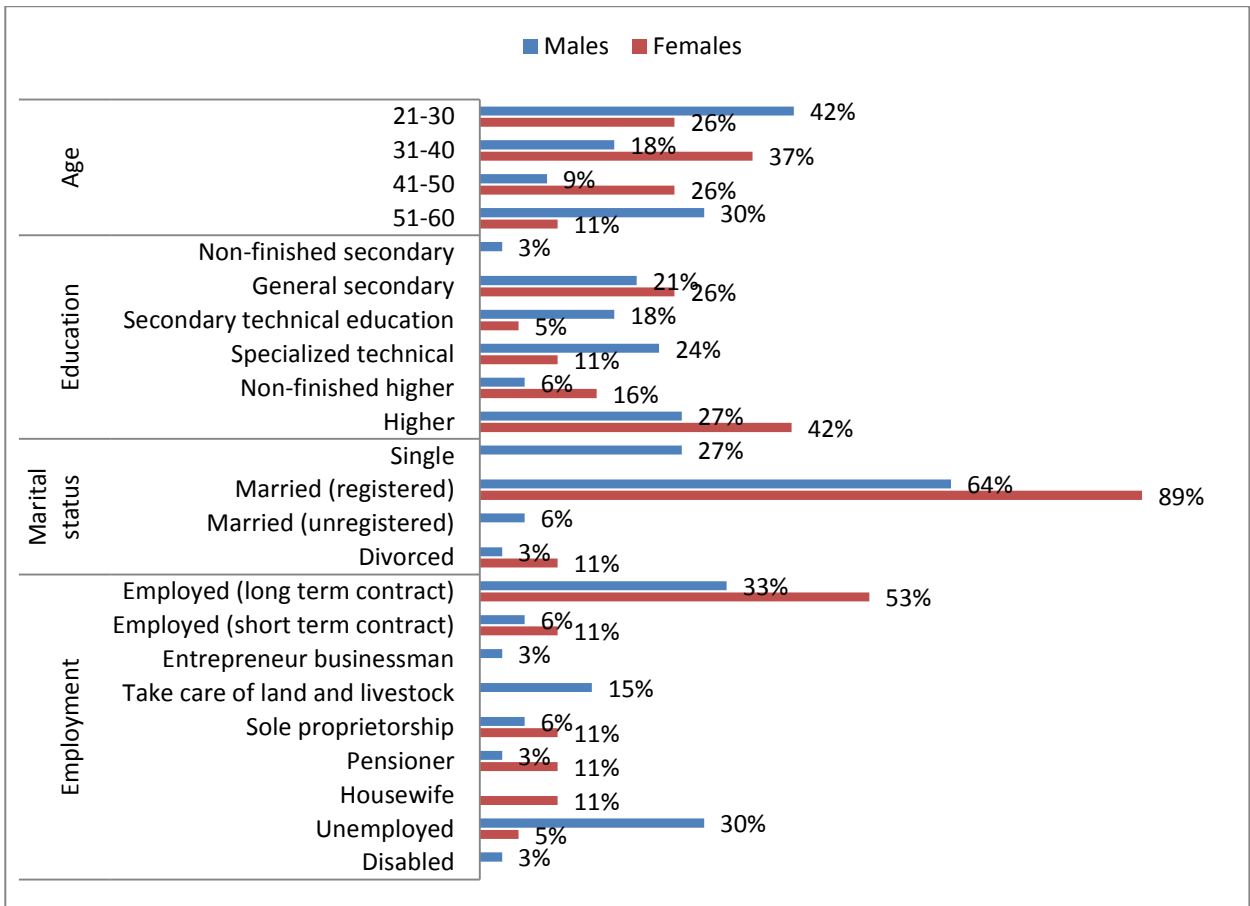
Field notes and diaries were transcribed and analysed using NVivo10 computer software.

3. Focus group discussions with residents of Alai and Chon-Alai rayons

The objectives of the focus group discussions (FGDs) were to explore:

- Subjective perceptions of women's current roles in the Programme's value chains, their social status and the potential for change towards empowering women (access and voice). This included gender-based patterns of work, including unpaid care work, and their relative rigidity;
- The extent to which women and men pass the benefits of labour on to their families;
- The influence of (1) the legal framework (such as inheritance laws), (2) customs (such as those relating to land and animals), (3) cultural traditions, and (4) religious practices on women's access to and voice/control over productive resources;
- The expenditure patterns of women and men, and decision-making processes within families on expenditures and other pertinent issues; and
- Gender-based opportunities and constraints to participation in households and community-level decision making.

In total, five FGDs were conducted in Gulcho and Daroot-Korgon villages. Two FGDs were conducted in each village: one with males and one with females of various demographic characteristics and social status. The pilot discussion was conducted in Daroot-Korgon village. In total 52 respondents (19 women and 33 men) took part in the discussions. The social and demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the table below.



The discussions lasted approximately two hours each. All the interviews were recorded for further analysis. All the discussions were transcribed and analysed with the help of NVivo10 computer software.

4. Case study

As part of the study, we have compiled data for four case studies that assess the impact of changes to the macro-statuses of rural inhabitants (such as migration experience, divorce, disability and so on) on the changing roles of men and women, and on the division of labour and labour burden on family members (including women and children). We paid special attention to the use of language by the respondents and by other community members when they talked about the respondents. This facilitated exploration of how the social and cultural contexts shape perceptions of the current status of the respondent, both self-perceptions and those of other people in the community.

PROFILES OF SAMPLE VILLAGES AND SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS²

Four villages were included in the sample: Kolduk and Sary-Mogol in Alai rayon and Daroot-Korgon and Shibe in Chon Alai rayon. There were 14 sample households included: three in Kolduk, two in Sary Mogol, four in Daroot Korgon, and three in Shibe. Observations were also made in one household in Gulcho and another in Sopus Korgon during one-day interactions.

² Households, identified as sample units for observation, are where field researchers stayed/visited and gathered information on gender relations and roles.

Kolduk village

A small village with 212 households (857 residents) founded in 1968.³ The village is located close to Sopus-Korgon⁴ village (three kilometres away), where the office of the *ayil okmotu* (local authority) named after K. Belekbaev, the office of “Kompanion” financial and credit institution, several shops and a handicrafts workshop are located. Residents of Kolduk village often run errands to Sopus-Korgon village and back.

In Kolduk village, the only social infrastructure is schools (one elementary, first to fourth grades, and one secondary school), and a recently-opened kindergarten with 50 places. The mosque is considered a local landmark, and is regularly visited by *davatchy* [Dawah preachers]. Male adolescents and young residents meet these missionaries in the mosque, in addition to attending the mosque for namaz.

Due to migration processes, currently 531 people reside in the village including 102 boys and 100 girls under 16 years of age (there are very few adolescents aged 16-17 years old: seven boys and 13 girls). There are 127 men aged between 16 years and pension age⁵ and 120 women aged 16 to 52 years.

Only two *ayil kenesh* [village council] deputies represent Kolduk village: one is a female secondary school teacher.

Traditionally, local residents raise cattle in the village, including yaks, cows, horses, sheep and goats. Most residents practise summer transhumance to the *jailoo* [spring and summer pasture].⁶ In recent years young men have been employed in other places in the summer: at construction sites in Osh or Gulcho, and also at a strip coal mine located in Sary-Mogol.⁷ In many families the older generation (grandparents) raise grandchildren because their adult children have left as migrants.

The sample households were the following families: one “headed” by a male municipal employee; another “headed” by a female school teacher whose husband had left his home and work the previous year to become an internal labour migrant in Osh city; and a retired couple living with a grandson and waiting to move to their son’s home in Bishkek.

- The family of the municipal employee was considered by village residents to be one of the wealthiest and most respected families. During the time of field research it consisted of six members: a 51-year old man (the head of the household, as reported by household

³ The date is that stated by local residents: no reliable sources were found regarding the history.

⁴ Sopus-Korgon village is not only the largest village in this *ayil okmotu* but is also well-known because several prominent politicians are from the village, including I. Isakov, B. Mamyrova, A. Keldibekov, and M. Sultanov and others.

⁵ Demographic information on Alai and Chon Alai rayons is rather specific because as a high mountain region it has a lower retirement age than other parts of the country: 50 years for women and 55 years for men.

⁶ According to information received from local informants in Chon Alai, around 70 per cent of local residents move to summer pastures. In Alai opinions vary: some informants stated that almost half the local population usually goes to pastures, while some said the figure was not more than a third. Local informants stated that even those who do not possess enough livestock to move to pastures use the opportunity to move with other residents’ animals, and serve as supporters to rich households or as paid seasonal herders. The report *Sustainable Land Management in the High Pamir and Pamir-Alai Mountains (PALM) An Integrated and Transboundary Initiative in Central Asia* also supports the idea that a significant proportion of the population moves to pastures in Chon Alai and less in Alai. The report mentioned that in Alai they mostly use spring–summer pastures near their villages.

⁷ Research in Alai and Chon-Alai, conducted by a team of Kyrgyz experts, found that hunting is another significant income source. “Men hunt delivering wildfowl to rich residents for payment of money or valuable gifts”. (See detailed: Project Report “Sustainable Land Management in the High Pamir and Pamir-Alai Mountains (PALM) An Integrated and Transboundary Initiative in Central Asia” Bishkek-2010).

members), his 49-year old wife, his recently divorced step-daughter (29 years old) with two children (a five-year-old son and an 18-month-old daughter) and his 13-year old son. The family has a small shop (a wholesale home-based kiosk) managed by the wife and the daughter, who bring goods from Gulcho once per week or fortnight. They also have a lot of livestock – cows, calves, horses, yaks, sheep and donkeys – produce potatoes and fruit (apples and apricots), and are involved in some crop production for household consumption. The wife stated that the family spent almost six years in Bishkek as labour migrants and returned two years ago. They bought livestock and a house in Bishkek for the oldest son (her son from her previous marriage) using money they had earned as migrants.

- The household led by the 43-year-old female teacher temporarily consists of three members: two sons (13 and five years old) and the mother (despite the fact that the decision maker is obviously the mother, the oldest son and his young wife stated that he is substituting for his father as temporary head of the household). But during observation the oldest son and his wife were visiting for a few days from Osh city, where both had studied at a university. The woman's husband is a minibus (*marshrutka*) driver and spent last year working in Osh. He lives in Osh with their two daughters, who are university students, and the son and daughter-in-law. The wife has high social status in the village: she is the head of academic affairs at the school and an elected member of the local council. The household possesses only two horses, one donkey and eight chickens; they also grow potatoes. As the mother explained, the family sold almost all its animals quite recently to celebrate their oldest son's wedding. The rest of the animals were sold to buy a minibus to provide a sustainable income for the family and an occupation for the husband. Perhaps, the possession of the minibus (*marshrutka*) and the household head's reliable teacher's salary leads the local residents to identify the household as not poor, but a middle-income family.
- Local residents identified the retired couple as one of the poorest families in the village. The household consists of the household head, a 63-year-old man, who used to work as an electrician and is disabled due to heart disease; his wife, a 60-year-old former nurse; and their grandson, a 10-year-old school pupil whose mother (the couple's youngest daughter) has been a labour migrant in Russia for at least the last three years. The head of the household does not see any value in livestock: he was the only respondent who considered this occupation not to be profitable: not liberating but "slavery". Local residents do not respect him, alleging that he is a chronic alcoholic. The household sustains itself on the couple's pensions and some small transfers from two migrant daughters in Russia, in Moscow and Ulan Ude. Accepting the complexity of life in the village, the householders stated that they will leave it and move to Bishkek for at least a few months in order to live with their youngest son and his family.

Sary Mogol village

The history of Sary Mogol village is unusual for a settlement in Alai rayon. It began in 1946, when according to a decision from the Soviet leadership, 10 thousand hectares of land in what was then Soviet Kirgizia were leased to farms from Murgab rayon of Tajikistan. These rented lands included the current territory of Sary Mogol settlement. These were mainly pastures located more than three thousand metres above sea level. As a result of this decision, a road was built between Alai and Tajikistan's Murgab, and in 1947 local cattle breeders settled in Sary Mogol, a new settlement on the route. Gradually the village grew as ethnic Kyrgyz from Jergetal and Murgab in Tajikistan

and other nearby Kyrgyz villages moved to Sary Mogol.⁸ Migration flows particularly intensified during Tajikistan's civil war.

Although the lease term agreed in Soviet times ended in 1990 and the agreement was not extended, the territory continued to be governed by Tajikistan. The issue was only resolved in 2004, when Sary Mogol was transferred to Kyrgyzstan's jurisdiction.

For many Sary Mogol residents, the decisions to transfer the territory to Tajikistan and then to return it to Kyrgyzstan created social problems: many village residents cannot retire because their documents remained in Tajikistan, their employment record books are not considered valid by Kyrgyzstan's authorities, and they need original documents that are impossible to restore today. According to 2007 data, approximately 180 local residents did not have Kyrgyzstani passports and access to social allowances whatever their actual needs.

At the beginning of 2015, there were 4,771 residents of Sary Mogol village, including 962 boys and 913 girls under the age of 16; 89 boys and 104 girls aged 16 or 17; 1,312 men and 1,436 women aged between 16 and 62; and 80 men and 68 women aged 63 or older. A total of 613 families (13 per cent of those in the village) are considered poor and low-income, and receive social allowances.

The life of the local population, given the area's harsh climate⁹ and seismic hazards, is full of challenges and hardships. At the same time the fact that the village is located near the highest mountain, Lenin Peak, contributes to an inflow of tourists and creates possibilities for the development of businesses such as guesthouses, public dining facilities and tourist companies. The village is one of the most important settlements for the Kyrgyzstan Community Based Tourism Association.

In addition, 10 kilometres to the north of the village there is a coal strip mine where two coal mining enterprises operate: a Chinese commercial entity named "Si Bu holding" and "Osh Pirim", a local joint stock company (the owner of which is Berdibai Pirimov, an entrepreneur from Osh).

There is a lack of clean drinking water in the village, and most residents drink water from a river.

It is very important for the village that it lies on international routes connecting Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China.

There were two sample households in the village: one extended family (of two generations, who own a guest house) and one nuclear family (a 35-year old couple with young children).

- The extended family consists of a couple with adult children: two sons, one daughter and a daughter-in-law. The family members identified themselves as a middle-income household, but in fact the father and mother do not receive pensions (because of the village only being transferred to Kyrgyzstan from Tajikistan 10 years ago), income from the guesthouse is not large, and they have very limited livestock: one cow, one donkey and two sheep (the parents claimed that they sold all their livestock a year ago to pay for their

⁸ Migration of the Kyrgyz from Jergetal and Murgab in Tajikistan to Sary Mogol is still relatively common.

⁹ Eight months of cold, unfavourable conditions for farming. Even though locals grow cold-hardy varieties of barley, perennial cereals and potatoes, night frost during the summer season often destroys these crops. Local potatoes are of low quality with small tubers. Only selling for low prices, they are mainly grown for household consumption, although a number of families traditionally grow them for sale, though only within the village and surrounding areas.

oldest son's wedding). At the time the field research was conducted, the oldest daughter was living with the family: she had returned from migration in Russia to give birth to a child. Her husband and his family had stayed in Moscow and she was expected to go back to her in-laws after giving birth to the child.

- The nuclear family consists of parents and four children. The husband frequently goes abroad as a labour migrant. The wife is a schoolteacher, but eight years ago she also spent a year in Moscow as a labour migrant. During that time, their children – six- and four-year old boys – stayed with her parents. Since that time the oldest son, who is now 14, has stayed with her parents (they live in the same village, so he often visits the family), helping them at home. Their children (except the youngest, an 18-month-old daughter) do a lot of housework: according to their mother this is related to their parents' migration. The wife identifies her own family as middle-income. The family has a lot of livestock (five cows, two calves, one horse, two goats, two sheep and a lot of poultry), and expects to extend this and receive its main income from livestock.

Daroot-Korgon village

gives the following information about Daroot-Korgon village: "Daroot Korgon is a village in the Western part of Alai valley, the center of Chon Alai rayon of Osh oblast of Kyrgyzstan. The village is located closer to Alai range at the entrance of their Tengiz-bai gorge, along which a road through Tengiz-Bai mountain pass goes to the north on the Alai range, leading to Uch-Kurgan and further to Kokand."

The history of Daroot-Korgon village goes back centuries to the time of Kokand-Chinese rivalry. The area was colonised by a number of tribes (Ichkilik, Adygine and Mongoldor), which later formed the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz people. In 1762,¹⁰ the Kokand ruler Irdana, in order to secure the conquered Kyrgyz lands for himself, ordered the construction of fortresses, including Daroot-Kurgan in Alai.

There is much evidence that people have been living in Daroot-Korgon since ancient times. The fortress built more than 250 years ago as protection from invasions by nomads, deteriorated with time, but in the western part of the village archaeologists have dug up a settlement dating to the middle of the first millennium b.c.e.

Today Daroot-Korgon is the Chon Alai rayon centre. It has more than 4,500 residents, including 1,811 children under 16 years of age, 1,804 residents of working age and 910 pensioners, and a total of 2,399 females and 2,126 males. In Daroot Korgon there is a public water supply for common use, although there are no water pipes in private households and people collect water in large canisters. Fifteen kilometres from the village, there is a large salt deposit, from which salt is extracted by several local commercial enterprises. Trade infrastructure is weakly developed, and the local population is forced to purchase household and industrial goods in other markets.¹¹

It is very important for the village that it lies on international routes connecting Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China.

¹⁰ The "Kyrgyz geografiyası" [Kyrgyz geography] encyclopedia questions this date, suggesting that the village was founded later.

¹¹ <https://www.ehs.unu.edu/palm/file/get/7633> ctp 31

Long-term cultural and financial investments by agents of development, such as the Aga Khan Foundation and ARIS, have been very significant for local development. In particular, they have brought greenhouse keeping and growing grain and vegetables to the area.

The authors of the feasibility study report for road construction (Termez – Dushanbe – Sary Tash) reported strong gender and some ethnic divisions among residents of Daroot-Korgon and Sary Mogol. It stated that males mainly work with livestock and consider this work to be their primary income-generating activity, while females were said to be involved in household reproductive activities, with their main responsibility being growing potatoes, barley and cereals. It was also stated that ethnic Tajik males are equally engaged with both livestock and crop husbandry as primary activities, while Kyrgyz males focus only on livestock.¹² It was also mentioned that local residents themselves underestimate the role of other income-generating activities. For example, males consider income from seasonal work (such as home repair or road construction jobs) as secondary and additional, while females consider their small-scale enterprises (wholesale trade or cafes) as secondary occupations even though their “main” occupation may be unpaid and invisible reproductive work.

The sample families for the observation fell into the following categories: three families that owned local guesthouses (one an extended family of three generations, the second a small nuclear family, and the third a larger nuclear family), and a family in which the husband is a small-scale entrepreneur offering transportation services.

- The small nuclear family consists of a man, his wife and an adult divorced son. They own a guesthouse, while the wife also manages a small workshop, producing traditional carpets. The wife used to be a famous singer at national level. Their son is a civil servant, working at the tax agency. The family has a very close relationship with the head of the regional executive body (the Representative of the President in the oblast), and this fact is always mentioned with pride to all visitors. The wife and husband reported that they once received a grant from the Aga Khan Foundation, where apparently the husband worked a few years ago, for small business development. The family has a very difficult relationship with their daughter-in-law and her parents, and because of this they cannot even communicate with their grandchildren. The parents cannot handle all the household work and are forced to ask their neighbours to help with bills. For example, the family possesses equipment for wool cleaning and carpet production, and need workers to run this equipment from time to time (when they get orders for products). The son is not involved in household affairs at all. He just comes home to sleep, and he even spends weekends outside the home (at least this was the case during the period when the observation was conducted). The family does not have any livestock, but they are considered wealthy by local residents and they themselves also claim that neighbours are jealous and do not like them.
- The extended family consists of three generations: elderly parents of pension age, a young couple (the household head’s son and his wife), two young daughters (four and two years old) and the household head’s teenage granddaughter (the daughter of a daughter who is a labour migrant in Russia). The son is a civil servant while the daughter-in-law is a music teacher at a local kindergarten. During the day, the grandmother mostly takes care of the children and her teenage granddaughter helps her. The guesthouse is separate from the home: it is located in another place and at the time of the observation nobody was living there and the household members were not working there, so it is unclear whose

¹² A report on assessment of social impact and feasibility study for building the Termez-Dushanbe-Sary Tash road. // http://piumotc.kg/uploads/____.pdf

responsibility it is to feed the guests, clean the rooms and so on. It seems that this is most likely the responsibility of the daughter-in-law, because her schedule was very strictly controlled by her in-laws and she regularly came home on time to complete a whole list of chores (including milking cows, cooking dinner, doing laundry and cleaning the house).

- The third family owns the most popular guesthouse in the village for travellers (tourists and business travellers). It is situated on the main road at the entrance to the village. The family consists of a husband and wife and their five young children (the oldest was eight years old and the youngest newly born). The husband is a former Aga Khan Foundation employee, and at the time he worked as a guesthouse manager and also as a leader of a local NGO. According to him, his wife was never interested in the business, especially the guesthouse business, despite the fact that she provided all the services in the guesthouse. Since she had just given birth and had some health problems, the household head brought his young niece (around 16 years old) to work as his assistant at home and in the guesthouse.
- The last family consists of three generations: an elderly mother (who is 89 years old), her youngest son (41 years old), his wife (36 years old), and their children (two sons and three daughters). The husband is a small entrepreneur who owns a van and offers transportation services or buys and sells coal. His earnings are the main source of income for the household, but it seems that the family is able to manage the money flow, because the wife stated that she is a member of a women's group that meets once a month for dinner and to which she contributes 3000 soms as a refundable deposit (a so called "black money box"). The family also owns some livestock: a cow and a few sheep.

Shibe village

Shibe village is located right on Chon Alai's border with Jergetal rayon of Tajikistan, and is a site of traditional economic and cultural exchange between the neighbours. In Chon Alai rayon, as far as Daroot Korgon marriages between citizens of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are not rare: this is why the local population has family ties on both sides of the state border. Shibe is no exception.

At the same time, the problem of managing disputed territories and border areas is increasingly leading to spontaneous clashes among local residents and border guards from the two states as a result of haymaking and cattle grazing on disputed pastureland, as well as in connection with cross border trade.

The history of Shibe's development is not adequately documented. Village residents state that people began living there as long as 450 years ago and they have long been engaged in cattle raising, whereas the *Kyrgyzstandyk geografiyasi* [Geography of Kyrgyzstan]¹³ encyclopaedia published in 2004 provides no information on the topic. The village is located two kilometres from the Sary-Tash – Irkeshtam highway (to China) and this means the local population is particularly isolated during the winter, when the road is snowed up and the connection to the main route and rayon centre becomes rather challenging.

Less than 1,000 people live in 186 households in the village. The population is equally divided by gender, with 477 females and 476 males. Of these, more than 42 per cent are children under 16. Slightly more than 11 per cent are of retirement age.

¹³ http://bizdin.kg/elib/kitepter/pdf/geogr_ensclp.pdf, page 540

There is a school in the village that was built very recently, but it is in a critical condition because building norms were violated during its construction, as well as the high risk of earthquakes, mudflows and other emergency situations. Other public places in the village include a mosque and two shops. Effectively the local population can work either for the local administration (the village is part of Jekendy *ayil okmotu* [local administration]) or at the school. The rest of the population define themselves as unemployed or as businessmen (farmers).

The village has problems with access to clean drinking water. The water source is located about a kilometre from the village. The closest accessible market is in Daroot-Korgon, where people go both to shop and to sell their goods.

Four families were observed in the village: the family of a young local farmer, living with his wife and four children; a family of teachers with young children, also growing potatoes for sale; the family of an elderly couple, living with their children and grandchildren and taking care of an older relative (the wife's mother); and a family of parents with six children in which the oldest son had been a labour migrant in Russia for the previous three years.

- The farmer's family started living separately from his parents just recently, because before that they had not had their own house. The farmer's parents were helping them to become self-sufficient and had invested money to buy sheep: since then he had begun his life as a farmer. The family possesses 40 sheep, which provide the household's only income. They cannot even grow potatoes like most of the population do, because they do not have land. The wife identified the family as close to middle, but mentioned a shortage of household goods. During the field research, they had four young children (the oldest son was eight years old) and the wife was pregnant. The observer reported latent tension in the family, and extremely poor communication between family members, including between the children. The husband leaned towards evaluating their status as middle-income but the observation, especially of malnutrition, may bear evidence of poverty.
- The family of teachers have four children, but the oldest son and daughter are both already married and living in Osh. The younger sons are schoolchildren. The family has no labour migration experience even though they mentioned hard times when bad weather conditions caused potato harvest failure.
- The family with a migrant son is unusual, because in Shibe migration is not a very popular life strategy. The family consists of nine members, two of whom (sons) recently left as migrants – one to Russia and one to Osh. The head of the household – the father – said that the son in Moscow was helping them become more economically self-sufficient: now they have three cows and 40 sheep and also grow potatoes.
- The most extended family has 12 members: the husband and his wife, her mother, five adult children, a daughter-in-law and three grandchildren (10, nine and six years old). Their neighbours considered them a wealthy family: they have 100 sheep, a few cows and horses. There were suspicions of physical violence against the daughter-in-law, and in general the family seems to have had a very patriarchal gender regime, which was in fact governed by the wife. All the male members of the household were very religious and one son was even dreaming of studying theology at university, while the older brother promised to send the youngest daughter to a medressa despite her aspiration to be a doctor.

GENDER NORMS, TRENDS OF CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET AND LABOUR PRACTICES

“Gender regime” perspective is used in this analysis to describe the conditions that differentially regulate the lives of men and women in contemporary, mainly extended, households in the surveyed sites. The term “gender regime” was introduced to sociology of gender by Australian researcher Robert Connell. It is defined as “the state of play of gender relations in a given institution.” The author who introduced this methodology for analysis of gender relations emphasised that it is useful for analysing dynamics of structures and understanding contemporary history.¹⁴ Using this methodology for clearer and more argument-based analysis of the dynamics in contemporary households in Alai and Chon Alai rayons, we analysed the structures of everyday life including labour, power and the system of emotional relationships.

A) Gender norms and the labour regime in contemporary families in the studied rayons.

The first aspects of everyday life that were observed by the research team while living with the various village families were how labour is divided between family members, what kind of tasks women and men in households perform and when they perform them, what men and women do when they are resting, and how much time they have for these leisure activities. For most of the village families, labour is organised around the keeping and rearing of the household’s livestock. In these families, as a rule, the whole daily routine is related to grazing, pasturing, feeding and other forms of care for animals. In addition, the daily routine of the families whose main income is provided from raising livestock has seasonal variations. Significant milestones include summer transhumance to the *jailoo*, autumn sale and purchase of livestock, and autumn and spring calving, kidding and lambing.

Traditionally division of labour in a livestock-raising household is gendered: taking care of animals (except for milking cows, horses and sheep), fodder procurement and growing potatoes (the most widespread crop in this area) is considered men’s work. Processing animal produce such as milk, cheese and so on, and work around the house, is perceived to be women’s labour.

However, observations revealed that children and women often perform traditionally men’s work. Girls and women perform women’s work, but specific tasks depend on status and age. Thus, in one of the focus groups in Daroot-Korgon, village women stated that in young families men reallocate part of the work taking care of cattle – such as providing hay, fodder or water, etc. – to their wives and children. This was also observed during fieldwork in Gulcho and in Shibe. A few times during the interviews, men commented on the obvious limited nature of their tasks, justifying their unequal share of “free time” by seasonal division of labour. In the opinion of some, men’s intensive work starts in the summer, while others said it began in the autumn. They considered the winter and beginning of spring to be a “dead” working period for males. Meanwhile, in the summer and autumn, women were said to have an unequally large share of free time. Female respondents usually did not agree with this opinion.

The types of work that remain inalienable from men have a symbolic meaning.¹⁵ These include taking cattle to pasture in the morning *kesuugo*, which is accompanied by active communication

¹⁴ R. Connell. Main structures: labor, power, cathexis. // https://stopzakon.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/connell_r.pdf

¹⁵ See also table 1, such types as going to the veterinarian to get services, negotiations about watering the land, buying / selling the animals, etc. are men’s prerogative.

between male neighbours, who combine into small communities and hire a *chaban* (shepherd) to watch them at pasture during the day during the winter period when the cattle are kept closer to the village.¹⁶ This work, and other types of work such as buying and slaughtering cattle, symbolise men's power and property. And even men whose power has declined feel themselves to be primary actors in these issues, and women in such households tend to support these "double standards", accepting men's exclusive right to decision-making in these areas.

It was found that unions in such communities are formed according to the homology effect (based on social class). In other words, in some of the observed villages we could see networking based on social status and level of prosperity, and as a result we could see segregation between poor and wealthy households.

During the summer season of migration to pastures (*jailoo*) young able-bodied men help their family move and set up a yurt and construct improvised cattle pens, and later go back home, to grow fodder to feed the livestock, grow potatoes, or leave to earn money. Those that leave usually work in construction in Osh city, Bishkek or even abroad, or as loaders or drivers at local coal strip mines. In a limited number of cases some young men from Sary Mogol village have an alternative source of income working as guides, providing horses for tourists, and so on.

According to the baseline survey data, the housework of a typical woman starts at 9 a.m. when she begins cooking, washing dishes, doing laundry and ironing, cleaning the house and other household tasks, and finishes at 11 p.m. when she gets her children to bed. Our fieldwork also revealed that women's workday had a highly routinized nature and had a strict schedule. In addition to the activities presented in the table, we found that lighting the stove¹⁷ and milking cows takes up a lot of women's time and effort early in the morning. This does not mean that women do not have any breaks and never get any rest. In fact, the female population of the pilot villages watch certain television shows and series as a leisure activity. However, even with breaks women's schedule is full, and there is almost no time to interact with their children.

The results presented in Tables 1 and 2 show that young women spend more time on education and less time on productive paid work than young men. Although there is a stereotypical belief that females interact more with other people, baseline survey data revealed that young females have less time to maintain and expand their social network than males. Another belief – that housewives watch more television than other people – was not supported either. In fact, young females have less than one hour left after housework when they can watch television. Usually they watch entertainment programmes rather than news and political programmes. This reflects the structurally-conditioned political and civil passivity of females.

¹⁶ Some micro communities do not hire a shepherd, but instead men from each household perform the role of day-time shepherd in turn. One should note that groups in such micro communities most often not only correspond to the neighborhood criterion but are also built by the principle that the wealth status of those who unite is approximately the same, at least in terms of livestock holdings.

¹⁷ In some families, lighting the stove was a responsibility of male household members, if there are no daughters-in-law or young men who recently got married or are planning to start a family.

Table 1. Typical activities that young men performed during the last day¹⁸

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	
Sleep, rest																									
Personal care																									
Eating/drinking tea																									
Tending livestock																									
Paid employment																									
Other household work																									
Self-employment																									
Reading newspapers, books, etc., watching television, listening the radio, working on computer																									
Interaction with friends/family																									
Conversation on phone																									
Livestock (poultry) care																									

Table 2. Typical activities that young women performed during the last day¹⁹

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	
Sleep, rest																									
Personal care																									
Eating/drinking tea																									
Cooking, washing dishes																									
Laundry/washing /Ironing																									
House cleaning																									
Other household work																									
Child care																									
Studying at school/university																									
Reading newspapers, books, etc., watching television, listening the radio, working on computer																									
Interaction with friends/family																									

During the season of migration to pastures women actively try to earn money from processed produce: they make *syuzmo* (sour cream) out of milk, dry *kurut* (round dried yogurt), and store butter, and the sale of these products at the bazaar then becomes a primary source of income. Frequently, a woman has no time to absent herself from the pasture to purchase products in the village or to go to the bazaar to sell the produce: her work at *jailoo* is endless, from collecting fuel material for the fireplace (firewood and *kyk* – cowpats) to constant milking of horses, whipping *kymyz*, milking cows and/or goats, separating milk, making dairy products, cooking food, and taking care of children.

The hardest burden of labour seems to fall on daughters-in-law, who are assigned all the work around the house all year round: cleaning, cooking food, serving family members and guests at meal times, baking bread, and taking care of children and the elderly.

Observations in families that included young daughters-in-law reveal a similarity in their “daily work schedule.” The system was best explained by Zaripa, a young woman from a family in Gulcho, who works in a “guesthouse”: “I alternate hard work with taking rest: for example one day

¹⁸ The table shows the activities that at least 8 per cent of respondents indicated. The results of the baseline survey of 129 young males

¹⁹ The table shows the activities that at least 8 per cent of respondents indicated. The results of the baseline survey of 120 young females

of the week I do the laundry, another day I bake bread, and another day I clean the guesthouse.” On top of that, on the day of our arrival and on the following day, when she did not do the “hard work”, Zariipa cooked three times a day – breakfast, lunch and dinner – took care of her two-year old son, attended to her father-in-law and sister-in-law, serving them food separately from guests, set the table for the guests, served and cleaned the table and made and tidied away beds. The routine is roughly the same in other families with daughters-in-law.

In families where newly married couples live with small children, all the work related to reproduction is allocated to the young female homemaker. Children – both boys and girls – are introduced to labour early on. As early as five years of age boys help their father take cattle for watering, feed lambs and help to fetch water. In most cases the whole range of “men’s work” is passed on to sons who have barely reached 13-14 years of age. In villages where there is no water-supply system, the responsibilities of sons and fathers mainly include providing the household with water: on days when laundry is done those responsible for providing water have to go to the water source two or three times a day. Usually the water is brought either in cans on donkeys or, rarely, in cars. A particularly important workload for males – both young and old – in the winter is clearing the snow. In some villages, for example in Shibe where abundant snowfall is common and often the road to the village is snowed over, young men have to clear snow not only from their yard and the area near the yard but also from the road, to make leaving and entering the village possible. This is almost compulsory community work, which is unpaid but highly respected.

From a young age girls become their mothers’ helpers, doing a significant share of work: washing cups and spoons after tea has been drunk, taking care of younger brothers and sisters, cleaning rooms, and helping to prepare meals.

Older women who have adult daughters and daughters-in-law as a rule do not do household work: they can look after grandchildren, go and visit their neighbours and relatives, go to the bazaar or to the shop to buy supplies, or do handicrafts. In one of the families the female family homemaker jokingly explained that she does not do anything around the house, while pointing at her little granddaughter: “This is my “document”, I sit around holding her.”

The professional work of young daughters-in-law’s outside the home is perceived by the husband’s family as necessary because the family needs the money. However it is presumed that the daughter-in-law will minimise her professional activities and maximize her contribution to housework. Thus in one of the families in Daroot-Korgon, where the daughter-in-law worked as a musician in a kindergarten, her father- and mother-in-law reluctantly let her go to work, asking her to do one chore or another. And just a couple of hours after she left for work they began to get nervous and ask each other when she was supposed to get back that day. The professional activity of a daughter-in-law from another family in Sary Mogol was perceived in a similar way. She is the head of an educational institution and contributed almost the only stable and, by local standards, decent income to the husband’s family.

The awareness of the husband’s parents and other family members’ about the daughter-in-law’s teaching schedule was a constant issue in all the cases studied.²⁰ Control over the time a daughter-in-law spends on professional activity is one of the important aspects of a mother-in-law maintaining discipline (*tartip*) over the young woman. As noted by one of the respondents at a focus group discussion in Daroot-Korgon, any hold-ups at work may lead to discontent and

²⁰ We discovered at least two cases (in Daroot Korgon and Sopy Korgon) where the work schedules of daughters-in-law who were teachers were strictly controlled by their husbands’ parents.

conflicts in the family, with the husband, mother-in-law or other in-laws. For this reason women are forced not to be active at work, and are afraid of or inclined to avoid developing their career, or participating in professional training and seminars: they also do not develop social relations outside their family space, or else they minimise such relationships.

Case study “child labour and migration”

Child labour is widely used in households in Kyrgyz communities. From an early age boys are responsible for bringing water to the houses and taking care of livestock (specifically they clean the folds and barns, and feed and water the animals). Girls learn early on how to become good housewives: they clean the house, wash dishes and clothes and take care of younger children. Children work much more in the household if their parents leave as labour migrants. These children usually live with their grandparents. In Sary Mogol village we met two families who have had migration experience that increased the scale of child labour in the household:

- A young family from Sary Mogol, who hosted the researcher, spent a long time as migrants in Russia. Initially the head of household, Ryspek, migrated with his young wife Aigerim just after their marriage. They lived in Russia for more than a year. After a year Aigerim had to return home to give birth for the first time. After bearing her child, she had to live with her husband’s parents and his siblings. While her husband sent money, his brother began to build the house for his own family. The construction lasted several years. When the family moved to the new house, they already had two children, both of whom were boys. Aigerim worked as a teacher at the local school and managed the whole household economy herself. In order to survive she involved her young children in household chores. As Aigerim said, her oldest son became her number one helper. He was eight years old when he started bringing water, taking care of livestock and cleaning the barns. Aigerim herself taught him to do all these tasks. When her husband Ryspek came back from his long-term migration, he did not take any responsibility for household work, and his children continued to complete all house tasks themselves. In addition to the above mentioned household responsibilities, for almost half of the day (before their mother came home from work) the boys took care of their youngest sibling, an 18-month old sister: they fed her, played with her, and made sure she did not creep away into the street. If she cried, they took her in their arms. At the time when the research fieldwork took place, the oldest son was 11 and the youngest was eight. So, they do the housework and took care of their sister in the first half of the day, and when their mother came home from work at lunchtime they went to school. The researcher noted that the father does not actively participate in the family’s life. He prefers to chat with the neighbours or ride a horse. One day, for example, when the children were cleaning the barn and bringing the water, their father took part in a horse riding competition (at the *At Chabysh* horse festival), which took place on the outskirts of the village.
- Bakyt and Gulfia live with their four daughters and Bakyt’s elderly mother, who is unable to care for herself. The family has recently returned from a period as internal migrants in Bishkek, where they lived for several years. Bakyt was working in the Dordoi market, and Gulfia in a school in a new build settlement (*novostroika*) near Dordoi. They used to live near the market. Because of poor living conditions and nutrition, Gulfia developed serious kidney disease and required urgent surgery. After she left hospital, the family had to return home to Sary Mogol. She did not recover quickly from her illness and was bed-ridden. As a result, at the time of the research her oldest daughters (aged 13 and 11) carried out all the so-called “female work” in the house: they cleaned the house, did the laundry, cooked,

milked the cows, and so on. The girls also took care of their elderly grandmother and helped their younger sister with her studies. The girls never played; as they simply did not have time. Sometimes, when Gulfia felt particularly bad, her oldest daughter did not go to school but stayed at home, caring for her mother. The father was usually busy with cattle.”

In the village most of the women who work are young, and the work they typically find is in teaching or healthcare. These professional niches allow them to combine their family responsibilities with wage labour with maximum flexibility. However, focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed a negative image of working women that had arisen among the male population. In particular, in one of the FGDs, when discussing the undesirability of women’s employment in the formal labour market a man said the following: “[If a women works outside the house], she would interact with co-workers [including other males]. Jealousy might arise. She would style her hair, put on a short skirt... It is not right if you read *namaz* [perform Muslim prayers], but your wife goes out and drinks vodka in cafes.”

Because in recent years divorce, and daughters returning to their parental homes with their children, has become almost normalised,²¹ in extended families a large share of the domestic workload is performed by another category of young women: daughters of the family. Attitudes in families about professional development for this category differ from expectations concerning daughters-in-law. Thus, mothers strive to “free” their daughters from housework, helping them to find employment through their acquaintances or encouraging them to go abroad as migrants, leaving their small children in their grandmother’s care. Mothers strive to empower their divorced daughters, so they can be independent financially, with their own apartment or house, a relatively stable salary (even a small one), and chances for professional growth. Thus, in one of the families, a daughter who returned home after her migrant husband married another woman was very quickly employed with her parents’ help in a rayon centre to work in the specialty she had trained in before getting married. She left her two children, including a daughter who had just turned two, in her mother’s care. In another family a mother actively encouraged her adult daughter, who was either divorced or temporarily staying with her parents (at the time of our stay she had been living with her parents for over 18 months), into entrepreneurship. Both women – the mother and the daughter – were very interested in possibilities to accessing “subsidised loans” or grants, handcrafting and selling products to “foreign buyers.”

In the FGDs respondents – both male and female – listed and evaluated the gender “identity” (ascription to one or the other gender) of a list of household tasks. Taking into account that men’s labour load varies significantly from season to season and that during cold times of the year (and in Chon Alai, for example, this season lasts almost half a year) men are “freer” than women; nevertheless, in the list created of labour responsibilities respondents stated than men have a heavier labour “load” than women (see the table below).

Table 3. Assignment of work responsibilities to family members

	Father	Mother	Son	Daughter-in-	Grandson	Granddaughter
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²¹ The justification for accepting this kind of return, which just a few years ago was perceived as shameful, is related to migration practices and the large number of young families that fall apart due to separation. These changing attitudes in a way alleviate accusations that the young woman was an insufficiently good wife and daughter-in-law, and instead are built around a story of lonely men who are seduced by women of easy morals as migrants. Many families conceal the divorce of their daughter and son-in-law, justifying her lengthy stay by saying that she fell ill as a migrant and needs care. After a married daughter stays for an extended period at her parents’ home the community is told about some grievances against the in-laws: such as that they did not make financial contributions to the upbringing of the grandchildren, or they did not observe necessary formalities in communication, and so on.

							law				er	
	Male	Female	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Purchasing cattle	91%	75%	3%	10%	34%	45%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Purchasing large household items	91%	75%	44%	45%	19%	35%	3%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Purchasing fodder for cattle	88%	75%	6%	5%	34%	45%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Payment of utilities	88%	70%	22%	30%	25%	55%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Payment of children's tuition fees	88%	70%	41%	30%	22%	40%	3%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Negotiations regarding watering the vegetable garden	81%	75%	0%	0%	44%	70%	0%	0%	3%	5%	0%	0%
Payment for medical treatment	91%	60%	44%	35%	22%	50%	6%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Control and management of family budget	91%	55%	56%	35%	19%	25%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Planting crops	78%	65%	9%	0%	63%	70%	3%	5%	16%	15%	13%	0%
Sale of crops	78%	65%	13%	10%	38%	60%	3%	5%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Taking care of cattle	78%	60%	13%	5%	59%	75%	9%	15%	19%	20%	6%	0%
Harvesting	75%	55%	28%	20%	59%	75%	16%	30%	16%	20%	6%	15%
Going to a veterinarian	72%	40%	0%	0%	59%	70%	3%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Slaughtering cattle	69%	40%	0%	0%	47%	80%	3%	0%	3%	10%	0%	0%
Purchasing clothing	56%	50%	75%	60%	22%	35%	25%	45%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Bringing up children	66%	80%	88%	80%	16%	30%	16%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cooking food	0%	5%	72%	55%	3%	0%	63%	70%	3%	0%	16%	20%
Everyday purchases	53%	45%	75%	45%	25%	40%	13%	30%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Collecting eggs	9%	0%	38%	40%	34%	15%	28%	45%	22%	40%	25%	30%
Shearing livestock	50%	45%	3%	0%	66%	80%	6%	0%	9%	10%	3%	0%
Cleaning the stables / animal pens	47%	35%	3%	0%	72%	70%	13%	10%	19%	45%	3%	0%
Taking care of the elderly	13%	20%	16%	15%	66%	75%	44%	40%	9%	5%	3%	5%
Fetching water	22%	25%	16%	20%	59%	30%	38%	35%	31%	50%	25%	40%
Taking care of sick family members	25%	35%	31%	20%	28%	20%	38%	30%	6%	0%	9%	0%
Cleaning the house	3%	5%	47%	45%	6%	0%	75%	75%	6%	5%	25%	15%

At first glance, respondents stated that more tasks are “clearly men’s work” (the tasks said to be men’s work are marked as green and yellow: frequently this responsibility is divided between an older man in the household and a young male) while “women’s” responsibilities are insignificant and even traditional women’s work (taking care of the sick and the elderly, and raising children) are not clearly assigned or not assigned at all to the sphere of women’s work.

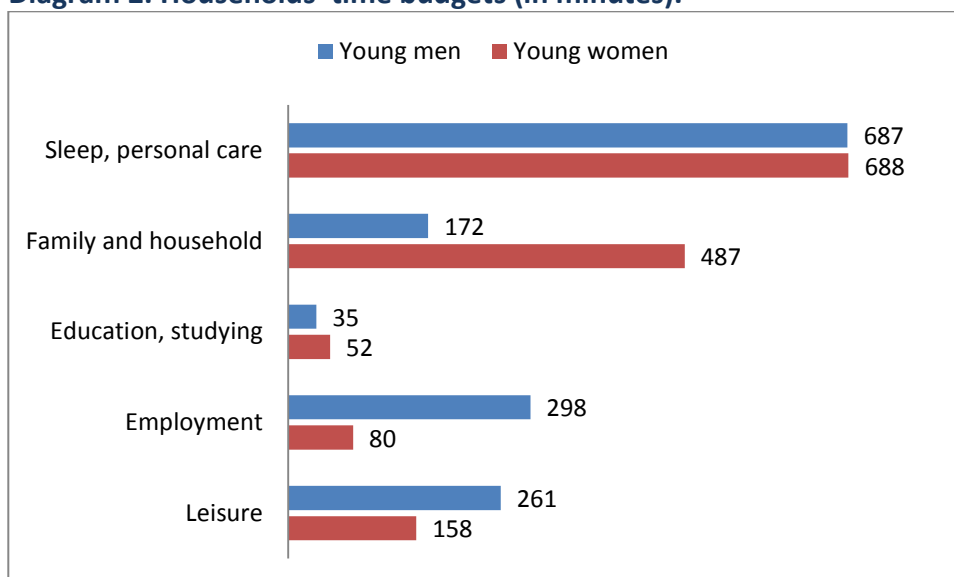
The assigning of specific work responsibilities by respondents reveals significant differences, especially for some types of work. Male respondents are most likely to follow “normative” gender division of work, assigning to fathers “symbolic” and power functions such as control of the family budget, all types of monetary transactions, negotiations about access to water, purchasing cattle, and so on while other functions, especially everyday household service functions (including cooking and cleaning) are most often assigned to women. The assigning of care for the elderly is most tricky. The meaning of this activity in traditional society is twofold. In the first, direct, meaning (physical care) this is considered to be women’s work. Another meaning, the symbolic responsibility for care for elderly and sick people, is always considered to be a male’s responsibility. In many cases, young males do take care of older members of their family when their wives and children move high to the pastures in the mountains during the summer season and they remain at home with their elderly parents.

The only tasks which were ascribed in the same way by women and men were types of work such as “cleaning the house” and “cooking food”, for which responsibility lies not only with the older women of the household and their daughters-in-law but also with the third generation: granddaughters. Discussion of the fact that the division of labour as assigned appears to show an “overload” of men and relative “underload” of women gave rise to an ironic mood at the FGDs. Several men in different groups voiced the same statement: “Today is a holiday for donkeys and women”,²² arguing that their mothers’ generation laboured hard and for long hours, while nowadays women have become very lazy, with the help of technology (for example gas stoves and washing machines²³).

Talking about his future, an adolescent boy in Shibe stated that it is his duty to take care of his parents because he is the youngest in the family. He did not consider work in the household to be “labour”, but a responsibility (*mildet*). It is interesting that in other villages and families where an adult, married son takes over the household and becomes breadwinner it is common for him to describe his labour load in terms of “care and tending for his elderly parents,” even if effectively the care is performed by other members of his family: his mother, wife or children. In other words, the symbolic value of taking care of the parents – *ata-eneni baguu* – is ascribed not only to the women who perform such care but also to the man who is considered the head of the household. Perhaps this explains the FGD respondents’ ascription of care for the elderly and children not as much to and not only to women, but also to men.

In the “Bai Alai” programme baseline study, the time budget corresponds more to traditional perceptions of how labour is divided in households between males and females. Diagram 2 below corroborates data collected during the field research, showing that women do not have structural opportunities to develop their personal skills and knowledge: they invest time in studying but do not receive any rational results.

Diagram 2. Households’ time budgets (in minutes).



²² In Kyrgyz: *Bugunku zaman eshek menen katyndagyky bolup kaldy*

²³ It should be noted that of all the houses visited by field workers, only one had an automatic washing machine. However, the daughter-in-law stated that because the house is not connected to the water and sewage system, the machine stands idle, and the laundry is washed in an old-fashioned mechanical machine. In many households in Alai and Chon Alai rayons there are either no electric sockets or they are out of order because of a total lack of household appliances and subjective lack of belief in their necessity.

Table 4 illustrates the gender differences in participation in productive and reproductive labour, and differences in allocation of time between labour and leisure. Women’s productive labour is almost four times shorter than that of men in terms of time, and six times less than what women spend on average on reproductive labour. Men spend just over the half the amount of time on reproductive labour that they do on productive labour. In other words, a large part of men’s labour is actually “seen”: it is often related to professional skills, knowledge, compensation, and entrepreneurship, whereas women’s labour is more related to “natural assignation”: invisible and unvalued. Even the specific reproductive labour (labour for the family and the household) carried out by young men and women appears qualitatively different. As shown in Table 4, women predominantly spend their energy and time on reproductive and household work, including time spent caring for children and the elderly. Men’s labour in the household, however, is mainly related to production of goods and may be monetised or measured. In other words a man can single out his “productivity” in work around the house and the family, whereas woman’s work can hardly be properly measured.

Table 4. Budget of time on household management (in minutes, source: Baseline survey of the programme)

Types of work for family and household	Young man	Young woman
Cooking food, washing the dishes	4	119
Doing the laundry, ironing the laundry	3	60
Cleaning the house	4	83
Shopping	14	21
Renovation/repairs (of housing and equipment)	17	11
Other work around the house	36	63
Taking care of children	6	78
Taking care of the elderly	2	16
Regular trips	24	12
Taking care of livestock/poultry	33	11
Vegetable gardening, growing fruit	15	4
Processing produce	3	2
Other home production	11	8

In the labour regime structure, the perception of the very notion of “labour, work” appears to be very important. It was discovered that there is a variety of terms in Kyrgyz that define labour or work depending on who performed the work, where and for whom: *ish*, *jumush*, *kyzmat*, *teiloo*, *baguu* [work, job, service, tending, care]. Perception of labour contributions turned out to be gender-specific: for example, men and many women considered those who are employed in a professional sphere and work for wages to be workers. Women who tirelessly worked from dawn till dusk referred to themselves as “unemployed,” “stay at home” or at best “housewives”.

The researcher Jeanne Féaux de la Croix notes²⁴ that “One often cited motivation for marriage by abduction is that the groom’s mother wanted help in the household. Similarly, the most often heard complaint about a [bride] is that she is lazy: this is also the most frequent ground for divorce that I heard from the side of the groom and family.”

²⁴ Jeanne Feaux de la Croix. After the worker state: competing and converging frames of valuing labor in rural Kyrgyzstan.//Laboratory #2, 2014, p.86

Talking about the home slavery of young rural women in Kyrgyzstan, it was observed during the study that daughters-in-law do not complain about being overloaded with chores. It seems that daughters-in-law's contributions to the economy of the family are very significant, and usually desired, welcomed, and constructed by the communities as a natural duty. However, they are often not appreciated as labour, even by the daughters-in-law themselves.

In the course of our study we discovered that in many families a negative opinion has been formed regarding the housework performed by daughters-in-law. In some families it was stated that the daughter-in-law lacks initiative: she cannot do certain tasks and does not desire to learn them (for example, baking bread in a tandoor oven, milking a cow, or cooking food). In other families they thought their daughter-in-law was indolent, so she must be lazy. In our field research we also encountered a case in which a daughter-in-law left her husband's home and his parents with her two children, effectively divorcing him after five years of living together. Her mother-in-law attributed this to her laziness and ungratefulness: "Many people come to us, to the guesthouse, and we also card wool. Everybody needs to be served food, and then the space must be cleaned again. That is why she (the daughter-in-law) got tired..."

Sometimes the division between labour and leisure for women did not have clear boundaries. For example, a female homemaker in Shibe village replied to a question about her free time in the following way: "During my free time I lie at home, wash my children's clothes, or patch up the holes in clothes. Sometimes I watch television, but we only have one channel here. But the entire village has an addiction: the "Great age" television series. It begins late, at 11'o'clock at night."

Another female respondent described her summer life at the *jailoo* to us in the following way: "It is good there, you can unwind and relax." Given how hard life is at the *jailoo* and how overloaded women do their best to produce more milk and other products, we could interpret such "rest" as a freedom from domestic 24/7 control.

Thus, in summarising the gender regime in the division of labour in the pilot households, we could mention the following aspects of relationships:

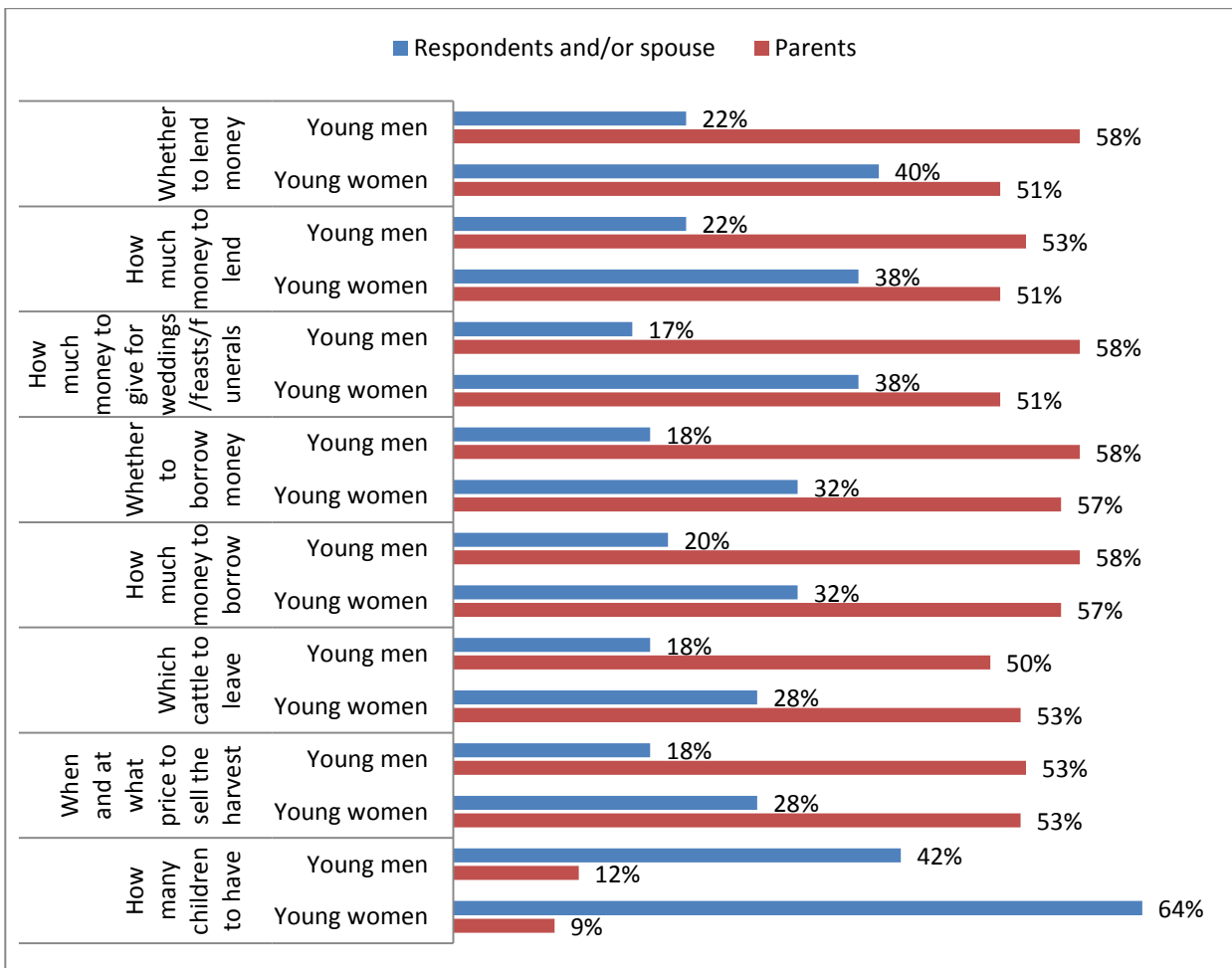
- *The rhetoric and practice of gender division of labour seems to diverge, in some cases significantly. Men are most likely to follow the rhetoric of traditional "normative" standards of masculinity and femininity and traditionally-assigned types of work within and outside the household. Women also support the traditional gender regime in rhetoric, accepting the leading role of men in the household despite the fact that females make a huge contribution in terms of labour and income;*
- *The most vulnerable members of the household in terms of workload are women, especially young women, whose work is not accepted as work but is considered a basic, necessary contribution, and who are almost deprived of leisure time and time for personal development and strengthening of social networks. Lack of time for young women is a crucial factor in their disempowerment since daughters-in-law begin living in a new community and do not have strong networks and community support. Thus, their only network is their in-laws, who a priori are not supportive towards them;*
- *Under the traditional control of different agents (husband, in-laws, the community in general) young women are forced to be passive and not motivated to engage in a professional career. The only requirement in regard to their professional work is earning an income for the needs of the household, and flexibility to combine productive work with family roles;*

- *The achievement ideals set for women do not promote an active role for young women in the family, community and professional organisations; on the contrary, they perpetuate the powerless and subordinated status of women;*
- *The practice of labour division demonstrated that women and children may often perform tasks assigned in rhetoric to men in a traditional society, and that men do not often fulfil the normative functions of a breadwinner. There are some types of work within a household that are always ascribed to the men, not because the work is too complicated or requires special knowledge, but because it is a symbol of power and ownership. Some types of work (such as kesuugo: taking cattle to pasture) are also symbolic for networking based on social class differences;*
- *This fact brings tensions into families and creates conflicts of personal identity for both women and men. A coping strategy employed by men is to deny the real role of young women, and to use the support of mothers and other relatives to increase control over and pressure on women.*

B) Gender regime of power in contemporary families in the studied rayons.

Traditionally life in extended, many-generational families in Alai and Chon Alai regions is based on the authority of older generations and obedience of the younger. These “norms” are assigned the status of key ethnic values. In the course of the Bai Alai programme baseline survey, most respondents stated that all the significant decisions in the household are made by the older generation: the respondents’ parents. The categories of decisions for which more than half of respondents selected their parents as the decision-makers include the following:

Diagram 3. Responses to the question: “Which family member had the most influence on making the decision on the following types of activity over the past 12 months?”



The diagram demonstrates the strength of the traditional authority of parents, who dominate decision-making in all the stated issues, except for the number of children to have (this is most often decided by the young woman and man). However, even on this issue the influence of the young husband’s parents, and sometimes the parents of the young wife, may be very significant.²⁵

Interestingly, the diagram reveals that young women are generally more likely to believe that they have power to make decisions regarding all aspects of their lives than young men do, especially when deciding on the number of children they want to have. However both young men and women consider themselves to have less power than the parents. Although the parents usually make most decisions in the household, younger couples also make independent decisions. This suggests either that young men are more prone to take their parents’ desires into account than the women who marry into their family or that men consciously play up their parents’ influence in order to “save face” and respect traditional norms.

But what is the status of power relations between the young spouses? Respondents from the older generation often recounted how the women had become daughters-in-law in families that were ill-disposed towards them, in which the husbands’ parents did not like them. They said that when there are conflicts in the family, a husband would never take his wife’s side out of respect for his parents’ authority. As stated to the observer by a female respondent: “My husband’s family did not like me and they still don’t. I had to go on a very difficult journey. But I was patient and my

²⁵ During the FGD in Gulcho women gave many examples of contemporary mothers-in-law advising their daughters-in-law not to give birth to any more children, and contrasting this with their own mothers-in-law who on the contrary advocated having many children and even demanded high reproductivity from their daughters-in-law.

husband always remained quiet, but I knew that he supported me. The fact that he did not criticise me, but understood that I was making an effort gave me strength.” Now it is difficult to imagine what the relationships were like during the parents’ generation in reality, but it is safe to say that young men are often inclined to act in the same way: in order to correspond to cultural norms and the gender role of a “good son” they support their parents’ position and let their wives know whom and how they should obey. For example, an observer in a family in Shibe had a chance to observe relations between newlyweds, in which the husband surreptitiously “punished” the wife for “improper behaviour.” The observer described it in the following way: “She [the daughter-in-law] showed me bruises on her arms on the third day and said that whenever she does things her own way and contradicts her husband he leaves bruises on her body [in places that are not visible].” It should be noted that the young woman concerned perceives the physical punishment to be natural and lawful: the only regret she expressed was about passing up other marriage opportunities: “She said that her current husband courted her for a long time, but she had other suitors, better ones. And when he complains or is not satisfied now she tells him: “You brought me here.” She also said that when she was at her mother’s home she cried, but her parents told her that she was the one who decided to marry him, now she has to adapt to this family.”

Connell emphasises that power is distributed not only between men and women but also among different men. In a book dedicated to issues of masculinity,²⁶ Connell notes that historically there is a principal division of masculinity into groups of men that possess immediate power (for example, military men) and those who possess knowledge (for example, scientists and professionals). The second group forms a “new middle class” in contemporary societies and has an indisputable advantage over the first one.²⁷

Describing the stratification dynamics in Soviet Kirgizia, researchers noted that: “collective farms became increasingly stratified, grouping white-collar workers like the chairman and accountant, the skilled, “modern” blue-collar workers like tractor drivers and blacksmiths and what [were called] the “lumpen” fieldworkers.”²⁸

In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan with the almost total collapse of collective farms, the household becomes the key business entity and it is within this framework that men’s and women’s hierarchies begin to develop. Previous social differences, with the exception of individual men from the rural elite who converted their status and authority from the past into significant levels of capital, lost their relevance in the household and kinship family. Contemporary farms create new hierarchies among men, and age becomes the key factor. Conflict between generations is reproduced through “expropriation” of power by the son’s generation, which also means the acquisition of additional labour functions and responsibilities by the younger men. In the course of the observation, the field researchers noted more than once the gap between symbolic acknowledgement of the power of the man from the older generation and his practical exclusion from decision-making by his sons. Thus, in one of the families in Sary-Mogol village only the older son in the family had significant power: he practically took over the reins of power at his father’s Community-Based Tourism guesthouse, and despite the fact that all the family members called

²⁶ Connell R. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1995., cited from R.W.CConnell. Structure of gender relations. *Неприкосновенный запас*. 2012, #3 (83) [Р.У. Коннелл Структура гендерных отношений. // *Неприкосновенный запас*. 2012 №3 (83)], Accessed at: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2012/3/k3-pr.html>

²⁷ I. Tartakovskaya, Establishment of the contemporary Russian gender system [Становление современной российской гендерной системы.], Accessed at: <http://genderpage.ru/?p=744>

²⁸ Jeanne Feaux de la Croix. After the worker state: competing and converging frames of valuing labor in rural Kyrgyzstan.//Laboratory #2, 2014, p.85

the father the head of the family, in practice it was clear that power lay with his wife and his son. Similarly, in another family in Shibe sons became the key centres of decision-making, with the father reduced to a symbolic (mostly silent) figure. The system initially does not seem patriarchal: it seems that earlier everything used to be organised around the mother, and the children have acquired a longstanding habit of turning to her for solution or blessings, and they turn to their father through their mother, and not directly. But the family's older sons had begun to be significant: at least, the children in the family addressed their requests to buy something or give them pocket money to the older son, who in practice controlled the family budget. The sons as a rule turned to their mother for advice, but she usually said that they should ask their father. In some cases the parents' opinion was merely a ritualistic act: thus, one of the sons saved up money and resolved to buy a car. Having called his mother he asked for her advice, and she redirected him to his father. In practice, it was clear that the son had made the decision to buy and was only waiting for a symbolic blessing to follow ritualistic etiquette. The youngest son of the family, also a very significant actor in the household, based his authority not on labour contribution but on knowledge: he is familiar with religious doctrine and is promoting a religious agenda in the family.

An interesting trend of change is found in the relationship between young men and their mothers in the families. As a heritage from the Soviet past households were recreated as matrifocal.²⁹ During the course of our study we discovered several families where mothers still played a key role in the family, possessing an authority, which was quite common those times. A convincing explanation of this matrifocality in Soviet families was made by a researcher, Irina Tartakovskaya, who later described the Soviet system of gender relations: "The central role assigned to women in the process of social transformation gave them certain power resources vis-a-vis men (although this position of power was very much incomplete and contradictory). Firstly, mass involvement in public production provided women with a certain degree of economic and social independence in relation to men (let us remember that work in production, in addition to salaries, gave access to basic social resources such as accommodation, medical services, food products, childcare facilities, and so on). Secondly, politicization of motherhood coupled with relative neglect of the role of the father legitimised women's control over children and undermined the man's position in the family. Thirdly, in various ways the state helped women to control men's behaviour: women were used as a sort of disciplining force in their struggle for cultural transformation".³⁰

In every village one can find several women-leaders of the previous era, who continue to play an active civil role in local NGOs or business. As a rule these women have remarkable potential for working with the population: they know how to organise events, possess rhetorical skills and have authority in the community.

A discussion with a group of such women during one of the FGDs in Gulcho found that social status of these women, who are used to being family leaders, in their households has dramatically changed to the extent that a new group of oppressed older women has been created. In particular, a woman who is particularly active with non-governmental organizations in Alai rayon openly declared that over the past few years she had begun to experience discrimination from the side of her own sons. As the woman explained her sons, in spite of her many years of public service and civic engagement began pressurising her to quit her job in a non-governmental organization, "to stay at home and obey [her] husband, not make [her] own decisions, and not

²⁹ Matrifocality is a term related to the system accepted in culture, in which the main responsibility for the wellbeing and welfare of the family lies on a woman. The father is either absent or plays an insignificant role in family life. See more at: <http://mognovse.ru/fmg-anglo--russkij-slovar-c-tolkovaniem-gendernih-terminov-v-stranica-4.html>

³⁰ Tartakovskaya I., Establishment of the contemporary Russian gender system [Становление современной российской гендерной системы.], Accessed at: <http://genderpage.ru/?p=744>

talk.” When demanding such behaviour they reproached their mother telling her: “we give you money, what else do you want? Why do you run around and bust your gut? You are a woman after all!” And although she is developing her strategies of opposition to the new authority of the new generation of men, she still has to manoeuvre: together with her sons and other family members they are creating new gender regimes. In another family living in Shibe village, over dinner the sister of the female homemaker (who is an authoritative woman) joked with the father of the family without really showing him respect. Her sister – the homemaker and mother of the family – who was sitting next to her seemed to silently accept this treatment of her husband. But the older son rather harshly stopped the irony and jokes towards his father, stating that “he is the best person, he is the only one in the world,” after which complete silence ensued and nobody turned to the father, or indeed to the son, with jokes.

On the other hand, we cannot claim a loss of status and a new victimhood among all the women of the older generation. Like among all the women as a whole, the patterns in relationships vary significantly, depending on objective characteristics of people’s lives (such as belonging to a certain “social class”). Thus, for example, in a household in Sary Mogol village a woman who is used to governing and making decisions in the family still has authority and power and governs the whole family, including her adult sons. Her husband, on the contrary, has a very insignificant role in the family, and spends most of his days in the mosque. His lack of authority is given away by his responsibilities in the family: he is responsible for heating the house (he lights up the stove), and in the summer he is responsible for cleaning the dirtiest places – the toilets, the shower for tourists at the guesthouse – and clearing rubbish in general. However, the woman generally adheres to the strategy of double standards: when asked who is in charge, she habitually points at him. During the first days of the observers’ presence in the family she demonstratively seated him at the most esteemed place at the table (*tyor*), while she herself would sit at the place of the servicing homemaker, at the bottom of the table. The observer wrote how the situation changed on the third day of the stay with the family: before beginning the regular meal, the female homemaker sat not at the edge of the table, but at the *tyor*, where her husband had sat until then. Her daughter remarked that she should sit at “her” [the mother’s] place: the husband who had just entered seemed surprised (usually very talkative he remained silent for a long time that day), but the woman did not yield the seat and only moved slightly so her husband could sit next to her. As the observer notes: “It seemed like the mother of the family had occupied her real seat.”

Discussions about the family budget and management of family finances are symptomatic of realities of power distribution. At the very beginning of the FGDs, an overwhelming majority of respondents stated that their families either have a “complete male management”³¹ or a “fixed budget for household maintenance”.³² However, when the discussion later touched on making decisions about spending the family budget, most expressed ideological support for the idea of gender equality and said that decisions are made jointly. Later on it was revealed that in most families wives or mothers keep monetary funds. The argument was formulated in the following way: men have many temptations and could misappropriate the money, whereas, women can surely keep it for the family. And finally, at the end of the discussion about family budgets and their management, respondents began saying that money is “concealed” from a partner. It turned out that men hide money but are often “caught” at it.

³¹ *Male whole wage system*: in which the husband completely distributes the finances of the family, provides his wife and children with all that is necessary, so the wife in this case may not at all have money for personal needs. The term is borrowed from a classification in J. Pahl. *Marriage and Money*, Macmillan Education, Basingstoke, 1989, p. 215

³² *Housekeeping allowance system*: presumes a division of responsibility when forming and spending the family budget. A husband gives his wife a fixed sum for expenses for maintaining the household: the rest of the money remains in his control and he pays for other expenses on his own.

Nevertheless, most female respondents were quite sure that men always have concealed money, while men often did not think about it, or thought that women had no need to hide money, as they could just take it. Both men and women said they had to hide small amounts of money from their spouses, but men reportedly did this for personal consumption (for leisure activities with friends, to drink alcohol, or to court other women), while women did so in order to purchase items for the household (such as dishes, curtains or textiles to sew *toshoks*), which would likely not be acknowledged to be rational or priority expenses by men. Meanwhile, women noted that in order for them personally to have the status of “good homemaker” it is important for the family’s circle of contacts to see that the family lives “no worse than others.” In addition, for women hidden pocket money is their only opportunity to fulfil their contradictory requirement in their role as daughters: sending goods and gifts to their own parents and other close relatives (*torkun*). Husbands, and especially parents-in-law, are not supportive of this but it is very much appreciated and expected by the women’s own family.

The power resources of young women and girls appear very important to understand the gender regime of power. On one hand, this group traditionally seems the most oppressed and discriminated against. Extant practices of coercion and violence in the home almost always affect them: bride kidnapping, all forms of domestic violence, forced marriage and forcing women into pregnancy and childbirth... Our research, despite its qualitative nature (we cannot claim that the data is representative), leads us to the following hypotheses:

Considering rural young women and girls exclusively to be oppressed may reinforce inadequate stereotypes that preclude understanding of real motivations and actual behaviour. It seems that most unmarried girls have some resources: if not direct power, at least the power to oppose authority in the family (of their parents, brothers and sisters). Thus, for example, in one of the observed families in Shibe, the daughter of the family was not always obedient and “diligent”, but only at moments determined by her internal logic. Thus, for example, the observer noticed hidden practices of protest against the image of a “well-bred and proper girl” imposed upon her by her parents, brothers and society: disregarding her brothers’ prohibition she applied rather heavy make-up in the morning; she could leave the house on the excuse of needing to charge a mobile phone but then disappear for hours; and she would have phone “romances” with several young men at once. She sometimes appealed to their fear of god and called them respectfully *ake* [big brother]. At the same time, as the observer noted, it seems that the girl, while articulating her desire to become a doctor, was not planning to oppose her brother's intention to “send her to the medressa, as her brother perhaps would not allow [her to become a doctor] and would not pay [medical school] tuition.”

Another girl, who recently married and now lives with her husband’s family, had, as it turned out, been kidnapped for a second time. The first time her parents took her back, while the second time she insisted and told her parents that she had come willingly. She states that both the first, failed, marriage attempt and the current marriage happened as a result of kidnapping,³³ but in both cases the grooms were young men whom she knew, with whom she “interacted,” but did not discuss marriage. It is interesting that the girl apparently did not want to stay in the village, and speculated that in the near future her husband would find work for the state traffic patrol in Osh city, while her mother-in-law imagines her son’s future differently: he and his wife will return to the village and work at the school. It is still unclear which scenario is the most realistic. However,

³³ The girl’s mother-in-law provided the information that the girl came in a good mood, she did not cry and did not protest the marriage.

there are some grounds to believe that the girl's plans have higher chances of coming true. Despite the patriarchal and traditional attitudes of her husband and the fact that she refers to him and his little brother as "siz" (the respectful form of "you"), the girl has learned how to speak to him firmly and directly when she thinks it is necessary.

Case study "Daughters-in-law"

There is a strong opinion that the daughter-in-law in traditional families is particularly oppressed and deprived of human rights. The observations in villages in Alai and Chon Alai have shown that despite a variety of positions of young daughters-in-law in different families, there is one feature in common for all families: daughters-in-law are all powerless and subordinated. Three cases below describe the everyday life of daughters-in-law: Altynay from Sary-Mogol, Batma from Daroot Korgon and Gulkayir from Shibe.

Relatives of Altynay's husband believe that she is very lucky to have them and that her new relatives spoil her. Altynay's husband is very enterprising and hardworking. He owns the guesthouse and works as a guide for tourists coming to Lenin Peak. The marriage was consensual. The bride was taken from her parental home and the groom's family paid a high bride price for her. Her mother-in-law mentioned that the family sold its own cattle for their son's marriage. In total the groom's family spent more than half a million soms on the bride price and wedding. It seems that Altynay is a favourite of her husband's family: her parents are wealthy and their family are well-respected and have a good reputation. She is well educated and has a good job (she is Director of the music school) and a relatively good salary: 10,000 soms. This is the only stable income in her husband's family: her mother- and father-in-law do not receive pensions. When her in-laws were young and were working, the village they live in belonged to Tajikistan. When the village was transferred to the jurisdiction of Kyrgyzstan, hundreds of local residents were not able to get pensions because they could not collect all the necessary official documents from the past. Altynay brings her earnings to her husband, and the whole amount is spent on food and expensive medical treatment for her mother-in-law. Despite her full-time job and her de facto status as breadwinner, Altynay performs all the household chores: cleaning, baking bread, washing, cooking and so on. Every morning she prepares breakfast for the family, sets the table, drinks a cup of tea and runs to work. When Altynay is not at home, her mother-in-law and sister-in-law (the latter's husband is a labour migrant to Russia and she came to the parental family for an indefinite period of time after giving birth to a child) state endlessly that Altynay does not behave properly, does not do something she is supposed to, often visits her mother and so on. However when Altynay is at home, no one says anything to her. It seems that her parents-in-law and sister-in-law are afraid of conflicts with her. In the evenings Altynay usually sits with her in-laws and reads religious texts (hadiths); sometimes she sings songs and plays *komuz*. In such moments, her husband obviously admires her. The husband's family all believe that Altynay is very lucky in her marriage.

Gulkayir had married just three months previously, and was now living with her husband's family in Shibe. She said that before getting married she was studying in Osh to be a teacher. Now she has transferred to distance education. Although she is originally from the village, Daroot Korgon, she tended to present herself as an urban girl. She liked to talk about how she lived in Bishkek and how she was very accustomed to a city lifestyle. Her in-laws are very religious: all adult family members pray five times a day and male members of the family, especially her father-in-law, spend a lot of time at the mosque every day. Gulkayir does not perform namaz yet, but she says she is going to do so. She admits that it is not easy to get used to her new life. It sometimes seems that she is disappointed with her marriage. In conversation with the researcher, she often recollected with nostalgia her student life, saying that two well-educated men wanted to date her. It feels that these men seemed to her to be better than her husband. She also says that her husband dated her for a very long time and she expected to have a bright future with him. However her expectations were not met and now when her husband is displeased with her, she tells him: "You yourself brought me here." Gulkayir has to work all day in the house: cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and baking bread. But almost all the family constantly criticise her: they do not like the way she cooks, and think she is very slow, inattentive, and indolent, that she has not learned how to milk a cow and that she quarrels with her 18-year-old sister-in-law Madina constantly (because Gulkayir thinks Madina

should also do some housework). During her last meeting with the researcher, Gulkayir showed bruises on her hands, and said that when she answered back to her husband he punished her, leaving bruises on the body. She said she was pregnant and that a short time previously, she had gone to her parents and asked them to allow her to leave her husband's house, where she feels unhappy. But her parents refused, saying that she had made the decision to marry and now she should stay with the family and not embarrass them. So Gulkayir realised that she cannot return to the parental family, and is compelled to adjust to her husband's family life.

Batma, a green-eyed beautiful young woman, has been living with her husband's family in Daroot Korgon for the last five years. Her husband works in the tax office, and his parents own a guesthouse. Batma is a music teacher at kindergarten. Her job is part-time: she only works a few hours a day. Her four-year-old and 18-month-old daughters usually stay at home with their grandparents when Batma goes to work. The family have a lot of livestock, and in the mornings Batma milks four cows. After that she prepares breakfast (boils water for tea and milk) and serves it. She runs to work for nine 'o'clock. While she is at work, her parents-in-law take care of her children. Her husband's mother often reads books and sings songs to her grandchildren, and they watch soap operas on television together. The grandmother knows Batma's work schedule well and towards lunchtime she expects her back from work. One day, Batma was late, and the mother-in-law immediately called her son, asking him to find out where she was. The son brought Batma home shortly afterwards, and she started apologising, explaining that the school director had required her to perform some additional tasks. The mother-in-law got upset and said that she would call the kindergarten director and ask him not to involve her in any further activity. After this the incident was over. The daughter-in-law changed quickly and started doing her tasks around the house. She has a lot to do: process milk and make *ayran* and *susmo*, bake bread, clean the house, cook dinner and wash up. When asked whether it is difficult to manage all this household work, Batma says it is only difficult when there are a lot of guests in the guesthouse. At such times, Batma also has to serve all the guests. Smiling, she commented: "We get used to this. This is our life".

Summing up the observations and conversations with respondents we can conclude that, new role patterns of masculinity and femininity are being formed in response to political and cultural and social and economic changes in the areas of work and authority within the household. Trends to radical conservatism in gender roles and the assigning of women exclusively to the household economy are countered by families' need for income sources, and the creation of universal or dominant norms of masculinity or femininity is complicated by the existence of various economic and cultural strata and classes. However it is clear that an increasingly negative image of professional women is developing, and young women increasingly have few choices except the traditional model of exclusive integration into the family and household economy. On the other hand, there is a need for further research to understand traditional concepts and characteristics of women's oppression within the household, in order to explore how the changing gender values and norms are dialectically connected.

With regard to the gender regime of power in pilot households, we can note the following aspects:

- *Traditional extended families postpone empowerment, not only of young women but also of young men. The reduced power of fathers in the family inherited from Soviet times makes the mother the most powerful. She is in fact is the main decision maker on spending, social networking, and so on. Therefore, the power wielded by married women is like a life circle – starting from powerlessness, through her life she slowly accrues more power and acceptance. This is why elderly women are most likely to be the main oppressors of young women (daughters-in-law). Since religious influence has increased, the power of mothers is now at risk, because a new generation of men is making efforts to change the power gender regime. Thus, older women – mothers – are becoming a newly marginalised category;*

- *The coping strategy of young women is to manipulate their husbands and wait until they reach the status of mother-in-law. After giving birth to three and more children, the power of women within the family increases;*
- *Young men are forced to control and “socialise” their wives to meet their parents’ wishes. They find themselves caught between their mothers’ and wives’ manipulation. Though subordinated they are powerful enough to punish their wives. Even younger boys in the family have the power to advise their sister-in-law, and she is expected to obey;*
- *The issue of money management is the key issue for the household and reflects the limitations to everyone’s power: parents and children, husbands and wives. In this situation the most powerless is the daughter-in-law, who is also under pressure from the community to meet the requirements of being a good housewife and a good daughter. Even if she earns a salary, she is unable to make decisions about expenditure.*

C) Regime of emotional relationships (cathexis) in family and society.

By the “sphere of cathexis” Connell refers to “constructed emotionally-charged social relations with “objects”, i.e., other people in the real world.” What communities of objects are included in the sphere of emotional relations of men and women? How are certain social practices around relationships organised?

Men’s and women’s sociality differ significantly depending on the type of village and level of development of leisure infrastructure. Thus, while spheres of leisure practically do not exist in small villages such as Kolduk in Alai rayon and Shibe in Chon Alai rayon (there are no sports facilities, cafes or *chaikhanas* (tea houses) in the villages), in villages like Daroot-Korgon or Gulcho there is organised leisure, and a location for the development of social networks for interpersonal interaction. The only public places in Kolduk village are a school and a mosque. It is apparent that the latter has become an attractive place for young men. An overwhelming majority of young men and adolescents spend a significant amount of time in the mosque every day. As a rule, they meet not only with the *moldo* (mullah), peers and acquaintances, but also with many *davatchy*: missionaries preaching Islam in towns and villages; they may also join a group of *davatchy* and travel to other communities. This is the only place where one can discuss relations between men and women, normative models of parents’ and children’s behaviour, Islamic values, commercial success or poverty, and other important aspects of life. The growing influence of the *moldo* and *davatchy* is perceived differently in families: in some boys and men going to the mosque become active agents and proxies of changes in family relations and practices, while in others the older generation impedes the growth of influence, even prohibiting mosque attendance. Thus, in Kolduk, the *ayil bashi* [village head] constantly checks the documents of the arriving *davatchy*, informing the *ayil okmotu* head about them: within his own family he and his wife prohibited their 13-year-old son from going to the mosque for the sermons that take place every evening. However, adolescent boys and young men do not have alternative options for their leisure time and the pursuit of personal development. Local self-government sees the lack of organised space for youth as a key problem and usually make efforts at least to establish basic football pitches or volleyball courts, for sports activities predominantly participated in by men.

In larger villages, young and older men have their own communities for spending leisure time: thus, classmates and friends meet at least once a month and pitch in to organise a dinner of *ash* (a traditional rice-based dish in much of Central Asia). In Daroot-Korgon and Gulcho there are cafés, billiard rooms and computer centres, where groups organised in different ways such as

(classmates, co-workers and friends) gather. Also, in larger villages *yr kese* (singing or other artistic competitions) are traditional, organised among *mahalya* (small communities). All the villages celebrate weddings and anniversaries and organise wakes for deceased relatives in the autumn. The adult population actively participates in such events, seeing the time invested and the funds spent on gifts as a kind of bank deposit that will come back when their time to celebrate a wedding or organise a wake comes.

During the observation period hospitality among neighbours was not observed: people who visited their neighbours for business were either not invited to the table to taste some food or – if such invitations were given – the visitors would decline citing extreme busyness.

As mentioned earlier, people in small villages live exclusively with their extended families. Connections with relatives who live in separate households are strengthened and reproduced not only through many ritualistic interactions during celebrations and commemorations, but also as a circle of trust when receiving loans from micro-credit organisations.

Though often a self-closed system, a family is nevertheless not necessarily a union of people that treat each other with sensitivity and tenderness. For example, a daughter-in-law in Kolduk village, who recently married a young local man, shared her impressions about the family with the observer: “The parents... are really uncaring. In my family if someone gets sick everybody takes care of him/her, while here a five-year old child can be running around with a fever and nobody looks after him. For me it seemed and still seems strange.”

In another family, an observer also noted that the family members find themselves in a hierarchy of physical violence, including physical abuse of young children by older ones. The youngest children, it seems, have a lowly position in the family hierarchy: they are very much subordinated. The relations between children are not particularly loving, caring and mutually supportive; the same could be said about those between children and parents. For example, a young mother who was out in the neighbouring village the whole day, met her five-year old son on her return home complaining about a bite from their neighbour’s dog. He was holding his side and asking to lie on *toshoks*. His mother paid no attention to this, and then he began to whine and say his side was hurting. The young woman did not get worried at all, and when the observer warned her about possible problems she reluctantly began to inspect the child’s wound. After this, the only thing the mother told her child was that he was a bad boy for going to the neighbours’ dog, and that he deserved this “punishment.”

In a shop in Sopu-Korgon village where the observer went accompanying the homemaker’s daughter, she had a conversation with the shopkeeper. When asked whether people buy toys for their children, he said with irritation and chagrin that “the locals do not even know how to love their children, let alone spoil them.”

As a hypothesis we may offer an explanation of this observed coldness and lack of love among parents and children, couples and others. Most likely it was inherited from a cultural norm that does not allow demonstrations of emotions in front of the older generation, and the avoidance of signs of closeness between newlyweds or young parents and their children in order not to “compete” with grandparents and their right to demonstrate love and emotions.

The responses from five groups, who were asked to formulate individually and then collectively define notions such as family, child, household, business and migration, seems symptomatic. Of all

the participants of five FGDs only one defined a family as a space of spiritual closeness (*ozuno jakyn, konuluno jakkan adamdar* ["people who are close to you, who are close to your heart"]). Most participants had more functional understandings of a family: a place to give birth and raise children, and a whole list of responsibilities for relatives.

COMMUNICATION IN FAMILY AND SOCIETY

The first conclusion that could be made from observation in the families is that family members barely communicate with each other at all, except for limited and strictly functional interactions. Most often communication flows are one-sided – from older to younger household members – and is mainly imperative: (do not) do this or that, be like this or like that... For example, in a family in Shibe an observer notes: "The father behaved very calmly and spoke little. Other men in the family spoke in a commanding tone:³⁴ "Give me that; put the tea pot on; why are you sitting around; get up; pour water on the hands; why are you standing there?" It all sounded rather coarse but was perceived as normal in the family. Nobody commented on it."

In rare families, one could see emotionally-warm communication among family members: only one observer, in a family in Sary Mogol, noted active everyday communication among family members, including the daughter-in-law. Every day all the family members shared their news over a joint meal: everybody received time and interest from other family members. Men related everything they had heard in the mosque, the mother talked about news from the school, and only the daughter-in-law was more reserved, yet she also participated in the conversation.

In the vast majority of families a woman plays the central role in communication: primarily the mother. A mother "possesses" communicative space: she initiates conversations, can make remarks and can limit the communication of some by asking questions of others. Often a mother becomes a mediator between family members. Thus, in one of the families in Kolduk, the stepdaughter and stepfather only communicated indirectly, through the girl's mother. Even in those few moments when the mother was somewhere else and the girl needed to communicate something, she always formulated her message on behalf of her mother (i.e., mother wanted to tell you that...). In his turn, the stepfather also tried to pay with "civil inattention" in communication with all family members except for his son and wife. At the table he communicated with his little granddaughter (10 months old) with gestures: smacking his lips, grimacing, and so on, conveying tenderness and making attempts to make her smile. Often when neighbours or relatives are in the house he exchanges several phrases with them, asking about the man of their family, health and life in general. The general avoidance of communication is a form of cultural taboo that is dictated to both men and women. There are some interaction restrictions between men and women: it is expected, that a father-in-law and a daughter-in-law will not communicate directly, and a daughter-in-law has some prescribed regulations on how to interact with other in-laws (for example, she has to avoid saying the given names of in-laws even if she is specifically asked about them). This is an old, obsolete tradition - *tergoo* (not addressing by name but addressing by some kind of alias signifying the degree of relationship or some other impersonal characteristic). Thus, for example, a daughter-in-law in one of the observed families in Shibe notes that she must address her sisters- or brothers-in-law not by their names but by saying "that boy" ["*tigi bala*" or "*kichi bala*"] or "that girl" "*tigi kyz*". In other families verbal avoidance

³⁴ Usually such orders were given to girls and young women.

does not concern everybody, but only the father-in-law and the husband's older brothers: others can be addressed by their names. Such verbal limitations do not seem to exist for men.

Active communication is either a female or youth attribute. It is an unspoken rule that respected men, a group which includes heads of households, cannot be talkative.

Observers in Gulcho encountered a very indicative case:

- The son of the family, when he came home in the evening, came to the fieldworkers in the guest room straight away: he sat down with them for dinner and after dinner, for almost two more hours, he told various stories about his life and shared his experience of developing the tourist business. He perceived his two-year old son, who was present in the room, as a kind of background noise, a hindrance to his communication with the guests: he tried either to occupy him with a mobile phone or send him to the kitchen to his mother. He addressed the child only once, in a joking form, when he (the child) climbed to his neck, disturbed the balance and both almost fell off the chair. At that point, he and his wife said they were sure that his (the father's) relationship with his son was much richer emotionally, and that he talked to the son more, than his own father does with him. It is noteworthy that later on in the interview his wife said that he usually only tells her interesting things about his work after long tours, when he has been guiding tourists.
- After more than two hours talking with the fieldworkers, the young man said in an apologetic tone: "It turns out that I missed chatting with people very much, I talked without rest, in one breath." The fact that the man lives in an extended family with his parents, wife, child, sister and niece proved no barrier to his complaints about his deficit of conversation with people.

Observers noted communicative alienation and lack of conversation even among children. Thus, in one family in Shibe, where the family consists of four children and their parents, the children – two older and two younger – mainly talked in the yard, "they even separated when they played." In some families, children have serious communication problems. In one of the families when asked to give an interview about his school, adolescent life and going to the mosque, a thirteen-year old boy could not answer the fieldworker's questions, let alone formulate a short story. In a voice breaking up because of distress, red-faced from embarrassment he could only reply "I don't know, no, I don't know."

Only in some families could one see that adults talked with their children, taught them something, helped them formulate and develop their speech. In one of the families in Daroot-Korgon, over the course of two days the observer saw how the grandmother sat down with two granddaughters to read to them from brightly coloured books. It was obvious that the girls liked these improvised readings, eagerly discussed the pictures, and repeated parts of the text. Afterwards the grandmother stated that this reading was motivated from two sides: by the girls' mother who had trained as an elementary school teacher, and by special training recently conducted by UNICEF at the kindergarten.

Limited communication practice is a feature of poor development of human capacity. Generally speaking, the so-called communicative culture of poverty is intrinsic in most of the families and is reproduced from generation to generation, becoming an objective limitation for young men even to enter a consensual marriage and for women and men to construct a trusting and warm atmosphere in the home.

Thus, when discussing of gender regime of cathexis in pilot households, we can note the following aspects of relationships:

- *Despite most of the households consisting of extended families, the ties between family members do not seem warm and loving. This may be explained through the tradition, still accepted in the rural community, of concealing emotions;*
- *Communication in families is limited to only the functional needs of the household. This can lead to poor functional education and cognitive development among young family members. Not being taught to communicate on various topics, men and women often are not able to properly express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. This may be a reason for conflicts and use of violence within the family and in community;*
- *The leisure opportunities open to young men are better than those for young women, who are not encouraged to go outside the household without a reasonable excuse (such as paid work, visits to healthcare/educational institutions or limited visits to relatives). In the case of young women, there is an acute shortage of institutionalised spaces for conversation, where women could enjoy solidarity, learn practical skills and receive knowledge, while being accepted and legitimised at the same time;*
- *The limited number of options for communication spaces for men also prevents them from developing their capacity and advancing their understanding of gender relations, roles and values. The absence of alternative spaces forced young men to become more religious, and be involved into Islamic activities (such as davat) with consequent implications for their understanding of gender relations;*
- *It seems that the community needs and appreciates any type of organised community activities, such as singing competitions or community festivals.*

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN THE VALUE CHAIN

There are few forms of entrepreneurship practised in the region. We encountered the following areas of business in the studied communities: livestock rearing, crop agriculture, craft, trade and services.

Livestock rearing

Livestock rearing is conducted to produce meat, dairy produce, wool/leather and associated products, and can include processing. In the course of observations it was discovered that business initiatives in households, despite their profit orientation, frequently lack a clear purposeful rational character. Investment in livestock is seen as an alternative to bank deposits, which in the population's perception tend to be affected by inflation, banks going bankrupt, defaults on deposits and so on. None of the families made calculations or kept records of flows of funds and property, or about annual profit levels. People began believing that the main indicator of wealth and most profitable way to invest funds is livestock, and increasing the size of the herd seems an obvious sign of profit growth. Fodder, veterinary and other specialist service needs are not calculated in advance. Based on their experience the owners know how much fodder would be needed in a month or another short period of time for a certain number of animals. In the spring they have to buy hay quite often, but they buy it in small quantities because they hardly ever have money reserves. Microcredit received by groups of relatives in local credit and financial institutions often are used as a source of finance.

In one of the families observed during the visit the need arose to purchase fodder for livestock for the next quarter, until the summer, and the owners as usual turned to the “Companion” microfinance company for credit. The observer tried to work out how they could purchase fodder by selling one of their yaks instead of taking a loan. Having listened to the options of a loan or selling an animal, the owners resolved to take the loan. As the head of the family said “selling a yak means decreasing the herd, while if we take a large sum from the bank and then pay it back in small amounts it is not noticeable, and if god allows we will pay it back.”

All households follow a regular yearly cycle: in the autumn they buy livestock, fatten them, produce young and then sell some of the livestock to provide for their living.

Sale of livestock is the main income source for households engaged in cattle raising, although most families also try to grow potatoes and/or animal feed, and sell the surplus. Some wealthier families try to create another, more stable source of income, for example by opening a small kiosk to sell convenience goods. According to local norms not raising cattle is considered inappropriate, and there are very few families like that in the area. In one of the families in Kolduk a female homemaker said with some regret that they no longer had livestock because they had needed to sell it to marry off their son: she had earned the money to buy the livestock working as a migrant in Russia. In the same village in a household which did not keep livestock, the male householder disdainfully told the observer: “They all follow their livestock here, they only count the hooves, all their life is like that of livestock: it has no meaning. I have tried everything in this life, I know for sure that one cannot get rich with livestock.”³⁵

Local residents can neither confirm nor disprove the belief about the profitability of animal production. People really only talk and reason in heads of livestock: no one calculates the labour invested in production, nor other resources (the cost of fodder produced and so on). This does not mean they are unaware how much they spend on fodder or veterinary services, or how much to ask at the market for the cattle they sell. They can also report the exact sum they received from selling dairy products. However, they do not make any written notes or calculate their own labour. For example, in one village a young man considered the short-term activity of buying turkeys and selling processed meat before New Year very profitable. His calculation was as follows: “I bought turkeys from several nearby villages, 25 birds in total, on average they were 800 soms each. Let’s say, I spent 2,500 soms to transport them to Bishkek and for the fuel to go to the villages. In two days I sold them all. The average price was 1,200 soms. It means that I received a clean profit of 8,500 in less than a week” (the time it took to go to the villages, find the turkeys, take them home, slaughter and skin them, and then take them to Bishkek and sell them in the market). The man does not account for the time he and his wife spent preparing the meat for sale, or his expenditure staying two days in Bishkek: he does not even notice these costs. The situation is the same with cattle: people do not know the exact cost of raising cattle, and the selling price is considered good or bad based on market conditions. Most people lack basic financial literacy: they could not plan the development of a livestock business rationally choosing innovative approaches (such as introducing high-productivity cows, reducing the number of animals but increasing dairy or meat production opportunities). That is why it is difficult to consider rearing livestock a purposeful rational activity.

³⁵ It should be noted that this person did not enjoy special authority: whenever he was named in conversation everyone noted that he was a drinker. And he, his wife and his small grandson were planning to move to Bishkek to their son for good, and so his words should be seen in this context.

Generally tradition assigns rearing livestock – the production and sale of animal produce– to men. As informants told the researchers, there are cultural barriers to women acting as traders in the cattle market and receiving the sum agreed: closing a deal is accompanied by harsh bargaining and is sealed with a strong handshake: usually the seller and buyer stand like that for a long time, wishing each other well. Because it is not acceptable for a “decent” woman to shake a man’s hand, special male middlemen are at the service of those few women who due to particular circumstances have to go and trade cattle on their own. Their function lies in “reaching consensus” on price and sealing the deal with a “man’s word,” for which they receive payments from both the seller and the female buyer (or a male who does not know how to bargain well or does not have business acumen when it comes to cattle).

Despite the barriers mentioned above, women do participate in the monetisation of cattle produce. Over the summer, women actively stock up on *kurut* (for domestic consumption as well as for sale), *kaimak* [fatty sour cream] and butter. Because value chains are almost non-existent, women (or, more often, their children) sell their goods in small portions at markets; the insignificant funds they receive are almost unnoticed in the household budget. One of the respondents told an observer that the carpet weaving she had initiated earlier stopped because there were no young women who wanted to work in the village. In her words: “Now young women prefer living in apartments in the capital and to work serving people rather than be in their homes in the village and creating something with their hands for the same amount of money. Older women, *bechara* [the poor], wait for Uzbeks or Tajiks to exchange *suzmo* for goods at three times their real price. They are not smart at all.”³⁶

Men, on the contrary, are traditionally seen as livestock owners, and when they sell it (alive or as meat) they receive significant sums, which are visible in the home budget. A limited value chain has been established for the sale of meat products or livestock: there is a supply channel to markets or directly to eateries in Osh city, and distribution on local markets. The potential for bulk delivery of meat produce to Tajikistan or China has not really been realised, although a limited (spontaneous) border trade does exist. Wool processing, which is exclusively a women’s activity, is generally becoming rarer because specialised breeding has been limited in the country and sometimes households cannot afford to purchase high-quality animals for wool. However, local women produce certain goods even from low-quality wool: mats (*toshok*), local-style rugs and carpets (*shyrdak* and *ala-kiyiz*), and yurts. But at bazaars everywhere sewing companies and certain craftswomen within communities offer a rich choice of traditional goods that are ready to buy. Women are also responsible for processing milk and producing dairy products: yogurt, cheese (of different types, including *kurut*), and butter. This work is usually performed by women but is not significant in the family budget because households normally have a limited number of cows and goats. The tradition of milking sheep and producing homemade cheese was lost decades ago.

All the strategies mentioned above for earning incomes from livestock a priori cannot be effective and successful due to the fragmentation of and limitations to production in household-farms, and lack of knowledge about promotion and sale of produce. Attempts to create larger farm units (cooperatives) that could receive proportionately larger financial and other support from the state and other stakeholders got nowhere. The reasons for lack of success include, in the first place, imperfections in legislation and inconsistency in changes to the regulations for the cooperative movement, as well as traditions of hierarchical organisations and lack of a culture of equal

³⁶ It is important to note that the salary that girls received for manufacturing carpets, according to the estimates of other local residents, was unequal to the amount of labour they put into producing the carpets.

partnership in business: thus there is an understandably high level of distrust towards each other and to cooperative enterprise.³⁷

It is very important to study challenges around raising goats to produce Cashmere wool. Among the residents of the observed villages, keeping goats varied from being unpopular to completely rejected for cultural reasons. In a number of families, discussion of the possibility of rearing goats met with almost complete indifference among respondents who seemed interested in new income sources. The study revealed at least three barriers to effective implementation of projects and programmes aimed at promoting value chains in Angora wool production:

- 1) **Cultural barrier 1:** In one of the observed families, a woman rather openly and harshly responded: “we are not so poor as to keep goats.” Further inquiries among local revealed negative traditional attitudes towards goat keeping and business related to it. There are proverbs and sayings (for example, “esin ketse – echki bak”: “raise goats if you have absolutely nothing”) that rather strongly associate goat keeping and poverty. Given the traditions of collective consciousness, under which a person strives above all to be “like everybody else” (*el agymynda*), and is unwilling to be cast as a poor family, the attitude to goats and goat-related businesses becomes clearer. Because of the lack of prestige in goat keeping, women and children rather than men are responsible for them in the households that keep them.
- 2) **Cultural barrier 2:** Lacking an earlier tradition of combing goats, local women cannot get used to the procedure: they do not like it, and the goats are not used to being combed (women say that the goats desperately resist, strongly bleating.³⁸ Apparently the combing procedure is painful because the goats do not get cleaned, and their fur is tangled and matted). Apart from it not being customary to take care of goats’ hair, there is a further barrier in the stereotypical understanding that shearing wool is a man’s job.
- 3) **Structural barrier:** According to several respondents, buyers who come to the village offer a rather low price for the product from the point of view of local residents,³⁹ not enough for them to “run” after goats.” Stories about a buyer who buys high-quality wool for good prices do not inspire particular trust among local residents. Moreover, usually households do not specialise in raising goats, and keep few of them. Therefore, combing goats’ wool cannot become a significant source of income because they shear little wool.

Vegetable production

As mentioned above, vegetable production in Alai and Chon Alai rayons is primarily potato growing and growing feed for livestock, but even good potatoes for sale are not grown in all the villages, and on all plots.⁴⁰ Some families that do not have livestock plant potatoes on their

³⁷ P.Alexander, G.Ibraeva, Trying to do business: Rural entrepreneurship and women’s work in Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan. Comparative Analysis report, Regional women’s entrepreneurship in Central Asia. ADB-UNDP working paper, 2011; A. Niyazova, G.Ibraeva and Sh. Ibragimova, Situation analysis: Opportunities and barriers to development of women’s entrepreneurship in rural areas of KR. ADB- UNDP, 2010 and others.

³⁸ It is not necessarily true that goats desperately resist combing because it is painful. It is a matter of getting them used to it and doing it correctly. Shearing can be even worse for goats.

³⁹ Local residents assume that purveyors have large margins, purchasing cheap and selling expensive. But since among the observed sample and in discussions there were no respondents with significant volumes of wool production, the topic did not raise great interest.

⁴⁰ See for more information: A report on assessment of social impact and feasibility study for building the Termez-Dushanbe-Sary Tash road. // http://piumotc.kg/uploads/____.pdf

household plots and rented plots, and try to maximise their harvest in order to earn more profit. As reported in the feasibility study on road construction, there are years of complete failure because of low market prices, but there are also years when growing potatoes may lead to a respectable profit (by local standards). Thus, for example, the years 2007 and 2009 were extremely poor for those farmers and the volume of potatoes produced decreased. But then again until 2011 the situation on the market was more attractive.

As a rule men and boys work with potatoes, although in some families women and girls also work with them. Interestingly, there is a division between growing potatoes on the land plot close to the house (*ogorod*) and on rented land, which is usually at a distance from the house: women are most likely to work on household plots and men predominantly work in distant areas. Women are more engaged in harvesting, while the sale of potatoes is a task for men.

There are local stereotypes that growing vegetables is not a good idea in Alai and Chon Alai because of the climate: harsh, cold winters, late springs and short summers. Despite some vegetable production success stories, especially in greenhouses, most people do not see it as another opportunity to generate income and improve nutrition.

When discussing success stories about growing vegetables, we encountered a stereotypical idea of laziness among the locals. But in fact people just do not see the opportunities: another area in which the “bandwagon effect” could change the situation. As indirect evidence we could raise the case of growing wheat, although conditions are definitely not suitable in the areas, and often wheat does not have enough time to ripen during cold years. However, local people still grow their grain because it is very expensive to buy external wheat. Unfortunately, fruit and vegetables do not occupy the same place in the local diet as bakery goods, and their production is perceived to be a risky business and unnecessary for personal consumption.

Traditional crafts

There are clear gender differences in traditional craftwork: men mainly work with wood, iron, leather and clay, while women predominantly deal with wool (felt) and textiles. For centuries local craftswomen have been famous for carpet weaving (today the methods are only preserved in Leilek rayon (in Batken oblast) and Chon Alai rayon). Conversations with craftswomen and their relatives have led to the conclusion that typically women get involved in this area **not** because it is seen as highly profitable, but because “it can be combined with the role of a mother and wife, and can earn at least some income on the side” and “there is no need to study “male” specialties, one can earn using existing traditional knowledge.” Moreover, craft seems to be a profitable niche with potential for internal regional consumption because a revival of national traditions and rituals has led to demand for a number of crafted goods.

Production of handicrafts in particular suffers from issues such as lack of developed value chains, absence of marketing strategies, and lack of technology and skills to work with new types of consumable materials. Most craftswomen say that they could produce various goods – from bags and fine pillowcases to carpets and scarves. But as a rule no one can determine whom to supply and how. Most craftswomen living in Sary Mogol would like to sell their goods to foreigners, but the number of tourists who come is not yet large enough to seriously count on income from craftsmanship (according to reports from a CBT coordinator in Sary Mogol, in 2015 there were about 600 tourists over the whole season, which CBT considered a great success).

Local craftswomen have problems producing traditional handiwork for several reasons:

1) The wool from the sheep bred in the area is of poor quality, and does not produce even, thin felt (due to an absence of selective breeding over the long-term and the dying out of breeds at local level). The quality of local handicraft production may be significantly lower than that of products made in Bishkek because the capital's crafters have been working with imported wool and felt for many years already. For example, the weight of wool carpets from the region makes it difficult for tourists to buy the products and take them away. Meanwhile, transporting them to the capital or other distribution points increases the price to the purchaser and the price-to-quality ratio becomes unreasonable.⁴¹ Local craftswomen across all the villages reported that almost no female crafters have achieved financial success⁴². Although in a number of *ayil okmotu* special production facilities for craftswomen have been established (for example, three kilometres from Kolduk village, in Sopus-Korgon village), but local informants stated that because of poor earnings and lack of demand the facilities are not open on a daily basis.⁴³

2) Local informants believe there is little prospect of further development of carpet weaving in the region because of its labour intensity and limited financial return. This is even true of a respondent from Daroot Korgon who used to have a small workshop but was recently forced to close it. The claim seems reasonable, because production is not mechanised,⁴⁴ and the product is heavy, making it unattractive to transport despite the uniqueness of design and colour combinations of the carpets and their low price (in relation to other valuable handmade products).

Trade and services

A large number of male village residents work in transportation: some transport coal, others work as taxi drivers transporting passengers. However, almost all the men who called themselves taxi drivers at the FGD did not consider the activity a business, or even an occupation. They said "I am unemployed, I do not have a job, I just drive a taxi." In an FGD even a man who owns a pick-up truck and has a steady income transporting coal from a coal strip mine near Sary Mogol, introduced himself saying he does not have a job and is practically "free" [*bosh*].

In recent years the hospitality business has picked up in a number of villages. In Sary Mogol village just 10 years ago nobody had a clear idea about the hospitality business, though some tourists passed by on trips to the Lenin peak. But after the Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association provided training and long-term consultative support, the first families offering guesthouses emerged. Today there are eight such houses in the village, while several other families erect guest yurts in the summer. There is an active CBT office there and total income from CBT-linked tourism came to more than 700,000 soms. CBT members have already decided not just to use this income for family needs but to try to invest in business development, and purchasing more modern equipment (such as kitchen tents and sleeping bags).⁴⁵ Women and men are developing specialisations in the business: men develop tours, lead tours, and act as guides, cooks, and

⁴¹ A. Niyazova, G.Ibraeva and Sh. Ibragimova Situation analysis: Opportunities and barriers for development of women's entrepreneurship in rural areas of KR. ADB- UNDP, 2010

⁴² Interviews with respondents in Daroot Korgon and in Kolduk (based on observation)

⁴³ During observation we tried to reach the place twice (both on working days), it was closed both times, nobody was there and we just got the opinion of nearest neighborhood.

⁴⁴ When producing carpets women in the old fashion work on "machines" that are more than a hundred years old. The technological progress did not reach the traditional crafts in this sphere.

⁴⁵ The information provided during the interview with the manager of guest house (observation)

loaders. Women only meet the tourists at home, cleaning and providing food. As a rule, the business is listed under the men's names and payment is usually made to the men as well.

The hospitality business is only just now being established, and only in villages where there is an apparent demand for tourist services. In some villages, such as Kolduk and Shibe, no local residents have considered starting such a business: it is seen as unpromising.⁴⁶ As stated by the head of one of the observed households: "Why would they come, to look at us? We could host guests at the *jailoo*, but how would tourists find us there?"

Women often work in catering: this does not have to be fixed-location "places to eat" but can also be a mobile service. For example, one woman who took part in an FGD in Gulcho village specialises in making *samsy* and *manty* on demand and takes the finished product to clients' homes, while another makes various "sculptures" (swans, "five fingers" [a braid of sheep intestines] and others) out of sheep insides and also takes them to clients on demand. In this village one can buy various types of *lepeshki* (flat bread) and pastries, while as little as 8-10 years ago it was impossible to buy flat bread at a market or shop. So at the same time as women are being "alienated" from a number of reproductive functions, they are also making a transition from invisible work at home that involves preparation and greeting guests to paid work. As stated above, women and the broader community favourably perceive such business initiatives because of their "flexibility" and the opportunity to combine them with family roles, reinforcing existing stereotypes about the areas of women's labour.

Trade in Alai and Chon Alai is still limited and very local. If local residents need to buy clothes or make substantial purchases they go to Kara Suu market, the largest in southern Kyrgyzstan, without thinking twice. Supplies for local shops are purchased in rayon centres. Women tend to run kiosks near the house, but if the sales outlet is in another location, it is likely that men will work there. This clearly reflects gender stereotypes: work in a shop that is remote from the household is perceived as an occupation or business initiative, while nobody perceives sale of goods from a kiosk at the house as a business or even as employment: it is merely what a woman can do as an "insignificant" side job to support family consumption. Trade in the geographical space between Karasuu market and Alai and Chon Alai's borders with Tajikistan and China remains very local and is in practice undeveloped. If the government eventually decides to establish the Sary Tash International Border Trade Centre,⁴⁷ this may increase and diversify cross-border trade. Currently trends are not favourable: every year imports from China increase, but exports do not.⁴⁸

Alcohol is not sold in Shibe. This is because of rational choice based on values rather than economic factors. This may be indirect proof that attitudes to money are based on religious norms and social relations. When the capitalist logic of profit maximisation claims part of the social sphere "the latter does not completely retreat but continues to exist, introducing new social hues into the cold world of monetary calculations, embedding them into the network of family, friendly,

⁴⁶ The perception of social justice is interesting among the local population in Kolduk village. Upon arrival of the observers a local contact person distributed the researchers among families taking into consideration the possibility of living in a poor family, in a wealthy family, and in a family that is believed, according to local standards, to belong to the average majority. And on the next day, the family that was considered wealthy was visited by three aggressively disposed women who demanded that for the sake of social justice all the three observers should move to their families. They rationalized their demand in the following manner: why would you pay the rich, everything is good for them already, and we do not even have enough means to buy bread. Such payment is more important for us!"

⁴⁷ The Government has planned the construction of such a Centre since 2007, it later became an objective in the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2012-2014, but because it has not been completed, the measure is transferred as an objective from one strategic plan to another.

⁴⁸ http://www.imepi-eurasia.ru/baner/Kuzmina_paper_2013.pdf

working, shopping and other interactions.”⁴⁹ Understanding this “embeddedness” of commercial pragmatism in social relations will facilitate better-informed selection of the project development strategy.

Thus, rearing livestock has become a valued activity and is considered profitable by most of the rural population. Being highly valued, livestock rearing is generally not properly planned. People just seek to increase numbers, and consider the amount of livestock equivalent to savings of wealth and money. But what to save for and how to develop cattle keeping in the future seem obvious, and so nobody thinks about it. Some households make efforts to increase their number of animals but do not change their quality of life as the numbers increase. Nutrition is an example of this unthinking approach to livestock: farmers who have cattle do not consume enough meat in their daily lives. So animals sometimes become intrinsically valuable in a way which contradicts the idea of business itself. Men and women are involved in the livestock value chain in different ways, but in general monetisation of livestock production is the prerogative of men.

The factors that hinder the development of value-adding livelihoods for women (such as goat combing and producing cashmere wool) include stereotypes and prejudice, limited skills and knowledge, and also a lack of success stories to be seen as role models. Therefore project initiatives must focus not only on introducing innovative approaches and technologies, but also on behavioural change.

Vegetable production as a profession also suffers from lack of knowledge and skills. Value chains are underdeveloped and require investment to support infrastructure and educate the people. Creation and promotion of a role model appears crucial.

Trade in both regions has a very local nature: the population know very little about marketing, sales promotion, creation of demand, and so on.

The most problematic issue is that in all the areas mentioned above no calculations have been made of standards for profit of any kind at national level and particularly in the local context. This could allow women starting up businesses to be aware of possibilities for economic growth and how to increase their productivity.

Given how new technologies and ideas spread across the region through emulation and imitation, there is a strong need to create and share best experiences, and to promote “women entrepreneur ambassadors” as role models.

AGENTS/ACTORS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

In the opinion of local residents, the Aga Khan Foundation and ARIS play a large role in development of communities in Alai and Chon Alai rayons. Many residents – both young and old – know about their activity not only by hearsay: they have clear understanding of what kinds of specific help can be sought from these organisations, by whom and under which conditions. Occasionally respondents mentioned organisations such as Helvetas and KCBTA. Often

⁴⁹Zelizer V. Social meaning of money. Basic Books. 1994 // <https://www.google.ru/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CCsQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fecsocman.hse.ru%2Fdata%2F2010%2F09%2F17%2F1215002339%2Fykonomiko-sociologix5eeskijx20podhodx20k..owanix40x20fpx20x20x5eastxx202.doc&ei=ThRPVdHPJcW1sQGd44C4CA&usg=AFQjCNHR8l6yKF7g2AvpC-9D92cTKL2Cwg&bvm=bv.92885102,d.bGg>

respondents had heard about certain projects or grants but perceived access to such programmes to be like entering a corrupt and privileged “club”: they said that grants and subsidised credit are only given to acquaintances and relatives.⁵⁰

During field research with the family of the *ayil bashy* [village head] of Kolduk, it was observed that the female householder received application forms for participation in the “*Ishker ayim*” [“active woman”] grant competition from the *ayil okmotu* [local administration] (through her husband who works there). Because the applications did not provide any information about organisers of the competition and calls for applications, the observer had to interview the woman about the source of the information. It turned out that neither she nor her husband knew any details. An observer in Daroot-Korgot encountered the same level of information awareness, when a woman householder received the same application form from Aga Khan Foundation employees without any additional information.

Given the low level of information awareness about opportunities to receive financial, consultative and other support, it is important to note the high level of motivation and interest in new economic opportunities among women of middle and older age.

In one of the FGDs in Daroot-Korgon, women aged 30-35 years (predominantly housewives or unskilled labourers) talked about the same thing many times: they usually invite women who work at schools and other municipal and state offices to participate in training on skills, eradication of financial illiteracy and business planning. Efforts to assist these women to gain access to knowledge and technologies are definitely doomed to failure because woman employed in the official labour market are not likely to leave their comfort zone and utilise the knowledge and skills received as entrepreneurs. Meanwhile housewives, who have an urgent need to develop business initiatives, are left neglected. One of the female respondents stated: “the people who invite women to seminars think teachers are smart and we are not. But we understand a lot and we are also capable of many things, even if we have not been to university.”

In the vast majority of cases other organisations are either unknown to the population, or people have a very weak understanding about what they do.

Non-governmental organisations are not sufficiently developed in the region. There are human rights organisations, including some which exclusively target women and youth; there are also organisations that provide specialised services to society (such as village health committees or associations of village health committees), and also membership organisations (including some that are developing entrepreneurship, such as CBT).⁵¹

In recent years, young men have been most active at trying to develop business initiatives and promote legal awareness. Often schools, which have implemented a number of projects for the community and the school itself thanks to school parliaments and the financial support they receive, become the “locus” of such activity.

⁵⁰ The Aga Khan Foundation was mentioned more than once in this context, as an organization for which project selection procedures are non-transparent, and information on opportunities to participate is allegedly only disseminated to “insiders”.

⁵¹ The leaders’ narratives about the prospects for their organization and what they revealed about target groups gave the impression that the biggest problems with institutional development, including issues of strategic planning, are experienced by human rights, women’s and youth organizations. Supporting such organizations to plan their activities to promote leadership and entrepreneurial initiatives among young women may be effective, because the leaders of these organizations as a rule have the authority and a high potential for mobilization of the population. The key drawback of such organizations today is lack of strategic vision and theory of change, critical understanding and understanding of which methods to employ with the target groups.

Other agents of local development clearly include prominent individuals who were born in this area, including “crime lords”, parliamentarians, and government ministers. In Daroot-Korgon village every resident, regardless of age and gender, recounted during our stay the significant role in local development played by “crime lord” Almanbet Anapiyayev, listed the sums of money and facilities that he “contributed” for the people, named the people who he helped cope with poverty, afford to study and so on. None of the development organisations was so aware of the real or alleged input of the criminal persona. According to the locals, information about his activity was disseminated through traditional structures and institutions, including *aksakals* [“white beards” or respected elderly man], mosques and imams, kinship communities and leaders of organisations that received help.

In villages that have no public places where large groups of local residents can meet and exchange information, such as schools and kindergartens, medical and obstetric stations are the only channels for disseminating important information. In places where village health committees are active, members of the committees go door to door to pass on information. However, in some villages, such as Kolduk, some residents have never heard of these committees and have never received information about health and other important issues.

Informal channels for information distribution include specific forms of men’s and women’s collective leisure, in which they regularly meet separately in small groups and spend time together over a meal. Such “get-togethers” last several hours, allowing for discussion of important issues, and learning about current local news. Everyday distribution of information among men in the winter is also possible either in mosques (among young men) or on the street, where groups of men get together to smoke and socialise.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Gender regime of labour:

- Despite clear ideas in society about men’s and women’s work in households, especially those involved in rearing livestock, the observation revealed that traditional men’s work is often performed by children and women, and women’s work significantly differs depending on the woman’s age and status in the family.
- The types of work that remain indispensable for men are those with symbolic meaning that demonstrate masculinity (carrying heavy items) or property (seeing off livestock in the mornings or visiting vets with livestock), or competency and knowledge (working as tour guides).
- Woman’s daily household routines are almost entirely made up of reproductive labour, which absorbs all their time budget and leaves almost no time for productive labour and participation in public life. This is why home-kiosks and handicraft are perceived as secondary occupations, rather than business, and why goals are not set to develop these initiatives.
- Women predominantly spend their energy and time providing care for family members, and providing conditions for reproduction of household members, while men’s labour in the

household is largely related to production of goods which can be monetised and measured (when it comes to rearing livestock and crop agriculture at the vegetable plot). Thus, even when involved in the household economy, men and women are not equal: men's labour is "productive", measurable and visible, while women's is largely the opposite. On the other hand, even the symbolic value of the care for the elderly carried out by women automatically goes under the husband's name: in the society they say that a son "takes good care of his parents when they are old."

- The daughters-in-law's contribution to the family economy is very significant. This is why the role of a daughter-in-law is constructed in such a way that only adhering to "discipline and obedience" [*tartip*] and self-denial through labour allows a woman to be seen as successful in her family role. Even daughters-in-law themselves often do not classify their activity as labour. In general, a shift and a blurring of boundaries between labour and leisure happens in the life of a woman-homemaker.
- In general, women's labour in a household is simply invisible: it is not recognised and a woman is considered lazy and idle to men or older women.
- A multiple-meaning understanding of the category "work" is formed for women and men: there is a variety of terms in Kyrgyz that mean labour or work depending on by whom, where and for whom the work is performed: *ish*, *jumush*, *kyzmat*, *teiloo*, *baguu* [work, job, service, tending, care]... Men and women consider workers (*jumushchu*) to be those employed in the professional sphere, working for wage. But certain types of work, it appears, have a "gender and age attribution", for example, *teiloo* (serve/tend – which is usually related to young women and young men), *kyzmat kyluu* (service/cater – is also related to young women and men).
- A difference in attitude towards young women is formed depending on their status: while a daughter-in-law's lot is to be subordinated and reproduce the traditional order of subordination, in recent years – as a result of normalisation of divorce and the return of divorced daughters – parents have developed strategies for empowerment of their daughters: they guide them towards professional careers and independence.
- As much as older household members would like to maximize their daughters-in-law's input into the family economy, economic needs force them to encourage the women's employment in the sphere of production and professional labour. However, strict control and the tendency for stigmatisation of women make professional careers less attractive.
- The division of labour, time budget and control over the daughter-in-law in a household complicate her opportunity to learn new skills. In order for young women to study and subsequently employ these skills in practice, members of the family and the woman herself need to understand the practical and specific benefits of such interventions, preferably in the terms of value to society.

B. Gender regime of power and cathexis:

- In the household power is distributed inconsistently and unequally in different power dimensions:
 - **Symbolically** it belongs to a man/or an older woman (the mother, if the family is "incomplete") and sons did not yet move out with their own families. In an extended multi-

generation family, power symbolically belongs to the father almost until his very death, and his wife loses her symbolic power with the death of her husband.

- **Economically** it may belong to a man (this distribution of power is based on the ideology of the man as the main breadwinner, as well as the high social status of a man in the professional sphere, and on educational capital). But it also often may belong to a woman if her husband's status is not high and she, on the contrary, is employed in the public sector and has a higher education and a high social status. It is important to note that women play a decisive role in the household. However a daughter-in-law, even if she is the main breadwinner, is absolutely deprived of the family budget and often even of her own income.
 - **Social** power within the household almost completely lies with the woman: determining interaction networks and reproduction relationships and filling them with positive emotional relations are a wife's prerogative.
 - **Physically** power is almost completely in the hands of men, who can threaten or inflict physical violence against other family members, including women. Masculinity norms include the right to impose sanctions to ensure family members keep to "gender role standards."
 - **Power of knowledge** (in the spheres of business – such as tourism, cattle raising, crop husbandry – as well as religion –spiritual knowledge and main law of life) still usually lies with men. Due to the traditional division of labour, women lack knowledge and skills. *Although, some do not see the benefit in knowledge and skills, many are willing to gain such knowledge."*
- **Decision-making power:** Despite patriarchal relations being reproduced in a large number of families and the fact that in most cases the older householder couple make the most important decisions, practices are changing. "Expropriation" of symbolic/economic and "delegation" of physical power by the generation of sons is happening more and more often: sons not only take away the right to make decisions from their fathers, but also enter into conflict with their mothers to limit their power and subordinate them (to a man's power). The latter trend reflects the ongoing formation of new role models of masculinity and femininity and represents changes to gender relations formed during and inherited from the Soviet period, when a matrifocal type of family was established.
 - Due to the "loosening" of power of older women in the household, new groups of oppressed women are being created, who are experiencing new forms of discrimination. On the other hand, given that older women are the cornerstone of reproduction of patriarchal culture and discrimination against young women and women in the family, an opportunity has arisen to "promote" a new type of relations and broaden the power and authority of young women.

C. Women's and men's participation in the value chain

- Women actively participate in almost all types of activity in the household, oriented towards livestock rearing and crop farming, but only within the context of the household. Belittling of women's contribution to the household economy and the tradition of viewing this input as secondary do not favour active women's initiatives to provide goods and services.
- Strategies to develop livestock rearing or craftsmanship and other types of business production often encounter not only objective challenges (such as insufficiently developed support infrastructure and limited resources) but also cultural barriers. This was analysed in

the example of development strategies for cashmere production. Most of the local population believe that only poor families are engaged in this type of work.

- Livestock rearing has become a valuable activity and is considered profitable by most of the rural population. Being of high priority value, livestock is mostly not a properly-planned business. People just aspire to increase their herd numbers, equating the number of animals with savings, wealth and money. But the answers to the questions of what to save for and how to develop cattle keeping in the future seem obvious, and so nobody thinks about them. Some households make efforts to increase their number of animals but do not change their quality of life as the numbers increase. Nutrition is an example of this unthinking approach to livestock: farmers who have cattle do not consume enough meat in their daily lives. So animals sometimes become intrinsically valuable in a way that contradicts the idea of business itself.

D. Potential for development and innovations in pilot villages in Alai and Chon Alai rayons: agents and their influence

- The key weakness of most programmes and projects implemented at local level lies in numerous, multi-level communication gaps. As has been shown, communication flows are not even effective within families and households. Even in small villages, in which the private life of every community member seems to be under the supervision of the community, success stories or experience of use of techniques often remain outside the community's attention.
- There is a low level of awareness about the activities of development agencies in the area. This lack of awareness and factual knowledge lies at the basis of distrust. Some informal agencies are perceived to be effective, visible and contributing significantly to development in the region in the eyes of local inhabitants. Examples of such agencies include criminal authorities (such as Anapiyaev) that make use of traditional structures such as local influential *aksakals*, religious leaders, community leaders (*mahalya*).

Annex 1. List of acronyms

ARIS	Agency for Community Development and Investment
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
KCBTA	Kyrgyz Community-Based Tourism Association
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor approach
MSMEs	Micro-, Small- and Medium-sized enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

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Annex 3. Research instruments

The structure of observations and the daily record book

1) Date

2) Name of the village, general information about the village and description of host family

This section has to include the name of the village the researcher is living in, and a general description of the village (total population and age-class composition of the village, primary occupations and so on). It is also necessary to describe in brief the family which is being observed.

3) Composition of households by generations – status and employment

Describe the composition of households in detail. This should include the number of family members, age, status and occupation.

4) Disposition and division of labour

Describe in detail how labour is divided among family members. The observations can be expressed as a table or a text accompanied with citations from interviews, photo and field notes. The detailed description of labour division must include one of the above-mentioned components. Special attention has to be paid to the gender aspects of division of labour.

5) Communication (including vocabulary)

In this section the researcher must describe the communication practices in this household. The researcher must record how members of the household communicate with each other, what vocabulary they use and how often they communicate with each other. This section also has to be accompanied with quotations from interviews, photographs and field notes.

The structure of the case study on summarizing gender study

1) Short description of an individual and his/her status

In this section the researcher has to briefly describe the person and the person's background, occupation in the past and employment history (incl. disability, migration etc.) by highlighting the stages of development.

2) Modernity

Draw up a detailed description of the respondent. Also, describe exactly the status of the respondent (disabled, wife of a migrant, mother of a divorced daughter and etc.) by including quotations, examples of behaviour in different situations and so on.

3) Groups, relations and networks

In this section, it is necessary to find out:

- What kinds of relations exist in this community and on what basis they are reproduced?
- Have changes been observed by the respondents? What are the reasons for these?
- What did you notice visually?
- What guides the respondent and people related to him/her in daily life?
- What do they consider to be valuable and correct?
- How is interaction built with the community? How do they interact, are they intended to interact, and are this type of activities planned?

4) Language

Set out the "internal vocabulary" of special words, terms and phrases used within the community, especially related to the current (problematic) circumstances of the respondent and the respondent's status. Also include quotations, examples of behaviour in different situations and so on.

FGD structure (after pilots)

Research topic: Evaluation of increasing economic potential of women in Alai and Chon-Alai.

Time needed: 2 hours 40 minutes to 3 hours

Introduction:

Hello! My name is _____, I work for _____.

Today we would like to conduct a focus group discussion with you based on research conducted in the framework of the Bai Alai programme. The Bai Alai programme is funded by the Government of Switzerland and implemented in consortium by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the Aga Khan Foundation.

Let's discuss the rules first:

1. During this kind of discussions the opinion of every participant is valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers, because our questions are based on daily life and issues, and I believe that you are an expert on your life. Therefore, every opinion and experience you tell us about is important for us. Also, if some of the participants express an idea or opinion which doesn't match yours there is no need to debate. Everyone has their own view.
2. As you may have noticed, this discussion is going to be recorded. The purpose of recording is to ensure that we have noted every opinion. I guarantee on behalf of the research team that all the information and opinions as well as the names are to be kept confidential only for the purpose of research.
3. I would like to ask you to speak loudly so that your views are better recorded.
4. This discussion will last three hours.
5. It would be great if every one of you could answer every question I ask.
6. I would like to ask you to put your phone into silent mode.
7. Let's start by introducing ourselves. Every participant can give their name, profession, work and one good individual characteristic. Let me start. My name is _____ and I work for/my profession is _____. At the moment I am working as a _____. The thing I like best about myself is _____.

1st part (30 minutes)

First of all let's define some phrases. You were given a sheet of paper, so you can write down your opinion about each of the following phrases/words:

A family

A household

A business

A child (children)

Migration

(The assistant can gather the answers from participants when they are finished. After collecting, the definitions should be discussed on the flipchart.

Do you know what family is? – summarise it on the flipchart and then conclude it by saying that most people in Gulcho think that family is _____)

2nd part

1. There are two types of income: official and unofficial. For example, a teacher's salary is an official income source, but if the teacher gains income by bribing students and requiring money

for grades this is an unofficial income source. If we are to talk about people in Gulcho, what kind of income sources do they have? Women and men? And, in general, who makes more money, women or men?

2. Do you know the income of your spouse/children/daughter in law? Who earns the most in your family? Do you make more or less money than your spouse? There is a belief that women have been earning more than men lately. Is this right? Why? How?

Men have not been allowing women to work lately, is this correct? Why? How? In what cases should a woman work outside the house?

3. Who handles the family budget and money in most of the families in your village? Women or men? Why? How? Who handles the family budget in your family? What about young families who live with their parents? Who handles their budget?

Who decides how to spend money? Will a conflict arise because of this expenditure?

4. Do women and men keep secret reserves (of money)? Why? If so, what is it usually spent on? What do women spend this kind of money on? What about men?

What kind of secret reserves do you have in your family? How do you know about it? Does your spouse help his/her parents and siblings with money?

5. Who does the following work within a household?

	Father	Mother	Son	Daughter in Law	Grandson	Grand daughter
Babysitting						
Taking care of elderly people in the family						
Taking care of ill family members						
Cleaning the house						
Providing drinking water						
Cooking						
Purchasing groceries						
Purchasing clothes						
Purchasing larger items						
Paying tuition fees						
Paying for healthcare expenses						
Paying for						

utilities (electricity and so on)						
Recording the family budget and book keeping ⁵²						
Purchasing animals (livestock)						
Purchasing chickens						
Dealing with irrigation of land						
Maintaining the barn and animals						
Shearing the cows or sheep						
Slaughtering an animal						
Dealing with vets						
Collecting chicken eggs						
Planting						
Harvesting						
Selling the harvest						

Why do we consider certain work as men's or women's work and more comfortable for a certain gender to perform?

6. Who makes the decision in the family regarding the following topics?

	Woman	Man
Purchasing things		
Choosing the profession of a child		
Migration		
Applying for a loan		
Participation in political or NGO activities		
Woman's participation in		

⁵² At this point it has to be identified by voting. How many of them have records of income and expenses and budget plan. Those who don't keep budget records should be asked why.

training and seminars		
Allocating any surplus		
Saving money to buy cattle		
Lending money		

7. In general, what kind of resources do businesswomen have in Alai?

	Younger woman	Older woman
Farm land		
Real estate or other assets		
Animals		
Vehicle		
Farm machinery		
Technology (depending on type of business)		
Information (about loans or business support organisations and companies)		
Free time		
Support from the family		
Support from friends or other groups		

8. Why are women passive in Alai in terms of involvement in business? What are the reasons for this? How can it be solved?

9. Do you know any local NGO? If yes, what do they do? What kinds of projects do you have information about? Do you know any project that supports businesses and involvement in business? Do local government bodies support businessmen or women?

At the end of the discussion, collect all the completed questionnaires, distribute money and thank them for their participation.