



**SECURING
WOMEN'S
RESOURCE RIGHTS
THROUGH GENDER
TRANSFORMATIVE
APPROACHES**

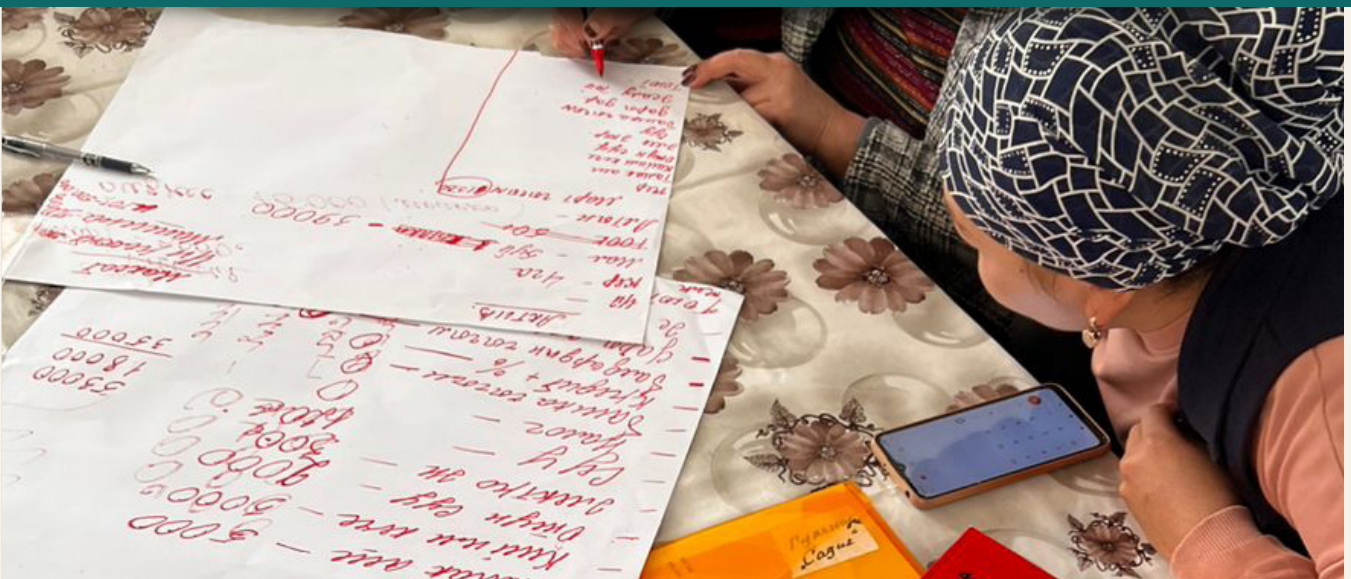


Investing in rural people



Developing Gender Transformative Approaches to Strengthen Women's Rights in **Kyrgyzstan**

FOUNDATIONAL GENDER ANALYSIS



Research Summary Brief



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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

SECURING WOMEN'S RESOURCE RIGHTS THROUGH GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES

In 2020, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) invited a consortium of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to work with selected IFAD projects to promote and strengthen women's land rights through the integration of gender transformative approaches (GTAs) in rural development interventions by improving policies, tools and practices.

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https://www.ifad.org/en/gender_transformative_approaches

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IFAD project network



Colombia
Building Rural
Entrepreneurial
Capacities
Programme:
Trust and
Opportunity
(TOP)
(2012- 2022)



Niger*

The Gambia
Resilience of
Organizations for
Transformative
Smallholder
Agriculture
Programme
(2019 - 2026)



Uganda
National Oil Palm
Project (NOPP)
(2019- 2029)



Ethiopia
Participatory
Small Scale
Irrigation
Programme
(PASIDP-II)
(2017-2024)



Kyrgyzstan
Access to
Markets Project
(2018 - 2023)



Bangladesh
Char Development
and Settlement
Project IV (CDSP IV)
(2011 - 2022)

Gender Analysis Research Summary



This series of briefs summarizes key gender analysis learnings from six counties, facilitating co-learning processes, knowledge exchange, capacity building, scaling out of good practices, lessons learned, and integrating evidence into advocacy and policy processes.

To achieve the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and reduce gender inequalities in land rights, integrating Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) into development interventions is crucial. GTAs address root causes of gender inequality by fostering lasting changes in decision-making and resource control, offering a strategic framework to enhance women's empowerment in accessing and managing land resources while challenging discriminatory cultural attitudes and institutional barriers.

IFAD's three-year Global Initiative for Gender Transformative Approaches (2021-2024) collaborates with partners to integrate GTAs into projects across six countries: Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Colombia. The

initiative aims to advance women's land rights by sharing knowledge, improving policies, and identifying diverse entry points for intervention in IFAD-supported projects and beyond. In-depth gender analyses were conducted in all six countries to examine the intricate relationship between local context, gender dynamics, and land rights. The methodology, based on stakeholder engagement and innovative tools, explored factors influencing women's access to land, including legal rights, customary practices, and gaps between recognition and implementation.

For a more detailed description of the gender analysis methodology, please refer to the Gender Analysis Methods report.



Gender Analysis Methods

By employing diverse data collection methods such as Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of gender inequalities in women's land rights, informing IFAD project design and implementation to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across diverse contexts.



KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII) WITH PROJECT STAFF



Introduction and project approach to gender.



Identify existing barriers and normative constraints to women's land rights.



Survey existing and potential **interventions, good practices, risks, and failures.**



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDER GROUPS



Perception of community context: describe conditions in community from FG participants' point of view.



Existing rights: increase understanding of how participants conceptualize property rights within the community and norms related to those rights.



Challenges and barriers to rights: gain understanding of operation of local rights (formal and customary) to identify patterns/drivers of security and insecurity.



Potential interventions: Understand participants' perceptions of interventions focused on resource rights equity and potential actions they could target existing challenges.



KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY PROFILES THROUGH GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS



Provide social, economic, agricultural, and political background information about the community, and the current situation in terms of use and access and control over key resources



Gain an understanding of community-level factors that generate or reinforce gender norms that hinder the full recognition and enjoyment of resource rights



Kyrgyzstan

Project context and key gender analysis methods employed

PROJECT CONTEXT

In Kyrgyzstan, IFAD funding helps reduce poverty and enhance economic growth in pastoral communities. Activities target vulnerable (especially women-headed) households and livestock producer households. Support is provided to increase production and to enhance activities further along the value chain such as processing, management, marketing and ownership. Catalysing growth in the livestock sector by moving away from input-driven exports of unprocessed commodities towards agricultural innovation, inclusive and comprehensive value chain development, food quality and safety, value addition, sustainable production, and resilience to climate change, natural disasters, and other external shocks, is considered as a real opportunity to achieve rural transformation.

The project paired with the Global Initiative, the **Access to Markets Project (ATMP)** (2016-2024), aims to raise incomes and enhance economic growth in pastoralist communities. Its development objective is to improve access and integration of smallholder livestock farmers into remunerative markets for their products, leading to improved and equitable returns. The ATMP project focuses on improving selected value chains by providing comprehensive support to enhance their performance and increase outputs. The project collaborates with champions within these value chains who are willing to strengthen their business models through partnerships among value chain actors. Smallholder livestock producers are included in each value chain, aiming to enhance their market integration and improve their income opportunities. Pasture users' unions, facilitated by Kyrgyzstan's Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS), actively participate in identifying and mobilizing target groups at the community level, ensuring transparency and community involvement to maximize project benefits.



GENDER ANALYSIS

The data collection instruments developed for the gender analysis were adapted to the Kyrgyz country and project context and needs. **Key Informant Interviews** with five ATMP country staff provided contextual information on the project, communities, and factors influencing women's resource rights. These interviews also sought to understand perceptions of the project team itself with respect to gender equality and the relevance of gender to their project. **Four communities were selected** for the community-based data collection: two villages in Issyk-Kul oblast (northern part), and two in in Batken oblast (southern part). The selection of communities, among those involved in the ATMP project, was based on purposive sampling, considering similarities in community size, economic development, social cohesion, and dynamism, but variation in gender relations, such that in each oblast, one village with more gender equal relations and another with greater gender inequality were selected.

Community profiles were created for each of the four selected communities. Two groups of 2-3 village leaders, one female and one male group, were interviewed in each community. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** were conducted in all four communities and participants included groups of landowners and non-owners segregated by sex, resulting in 16 FGDs with a total of 111 participants: 55 women and 56 men, between the age of 19 and 68. The FGD guide used during the study included questions about the community context, existing rights to land and resources, challenges to these rights, and potential solutions. Poll questions were also included to capture individual views and stimulate discussion. The responses to the poll questions were analysed in real-time and shared with the participants to encourage further conversation. To further enrich the data, **19 in-depth interviews** were conducted with Pasture User Union chairpersons and Pasture User Association members focused on pasture-related issues and villagers' participation in pasture management.

Study limitation: Limiting the focus to four communities may not fully capture the obstacles preventing women from enjoying land rights across Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, the research team encountered difficulties due to the lack of comprehensive statistical data on selected villages. The existing statistical data in the villages was fragmented and inconsistent across different departments.



Key Learnings

All study participants recognised that Kyrgyz women and men have equal rights to land before the law. Yet, the study identified several challenges and dynamics within communities that affect equitable and sustainable land use, including patriarchal attitudes and other obstacles to women's land rights include patriarchal, as well as different perspectives on transformative opportunities.



CHALLENGES TO EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

LACK OF INFORMATION, TRUST, AND COLLABORATION:

- Participants expressed a lack of information and knowledge on regulations, policies, and procedures related to land ownership and management (land rights, land taxes, conflict resolution, etc.). There is confusion around the current process of digitization of land rights (digitally documenting transactions related to land use and ownership in the Kyrgyz land register) and its implications.
- Lack of effective and inclusive communication spaces and uneven distribution of information among population groups hinder cooperation at the community level.
- Local authorities face issues of mistrust and a perceived lack of professionalism and irrational management of land resources.
- Local governments and pasture committee leaders consider that the local population is disinterested in participating in pasture management and community decision-making. They also accuse pasture users of various violations, such as unauthorized cattle grazing, improper waste disposal, illegal construction on pasture areas or farmland, concealing livestock numbers, and unauthorized commercial livestock grazing by residents from other territories.
- Conflicts arise between different land use entities such as local authorities, pasture committees, and forestry, hindering collaborative approaches.
- Development agency projects are perceived to lack transparency, and information gaps lead to a lack of understanding among the local population and government.

PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES AND GENDER DYNAMICS:

- Patriarchal attitudes, expressed by men as well as women who uphold patriarchal norms, favour male dominance in land use and society. Most respondents support the idea that men should have more rights to land than women.
- Non-conformity to gender norms can result in stigmatization and exclusion. As such, women leaders publicly demonstrate that they adhere to expected gender roles and behaviours to fulfil cultural expectations.
- Communities, especially younger men, refute the idea that gender equality is not already achieved to the extent that it should be. There is movement in recent years toward more conservative values.
- Women who own land generally perceive their rights as protected and secure. However, among non-landowners, women are more likely to perceive their land rights as insecure compared to men.
- On household plots, women-led households face more difficulties than men in hiring wage laborers for plowing, sowing and harvesting.
- Limited access to land for women and young people (especially young women) encourages them to migrate.
- Women's participation in land and pasture management is perceived as minimal due to traditional patriarchal norms and societal constraints. Domestic workloads perceived physical limitations to women engaging in animal husbandry or agriculture, and societal constraints such as traditional mentalities and religious gender norms, including lack of support at family and community levels, discourage women from being active land managers.
- Yet, according to a woman leader of the *raion* Pasture Users Union, some women are interested and actively involved in improving pastures, but they remain invisible in pasture management, which perpetuates the notion that women lack interest and capacities in decision-making.



02

MAIN OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

- Traditional Gender Norms:** As noted above, participants expressed adherence to traditional gender roles, where women are expected to occupy subordinate positions and not make decisions about land. Discriminatory views were prevalent, including beliefs that girls should not inherit land and that women should not have a say in land-related matters. These conservative perceptions were more pronounced in southern communities.
- Loss of Land Rights during Marriage:** While Kyrgyz law grants equal land ownership and inheritance rights to women and men, women often relinquish their land shares when they leave their parental families due to marriage.
- New land registration** is predominantly made in men's names.
- Incomplete Land Registration:** Limited registration of land has contributed to conflicts and disputes. Many land plots remain unregistered, and after the death of parents, require the consent of all children to formalize land rights. This has led to conflicts over property division, with some daughters actively participating despite the traditional expectation that the youngest son inherits the property.
- Social Stigma and Embarrassment:** Women face social pressure and embarrassment when asserting their land rights. They may hesitate to approach authorities or the courts to claim their land share, considering it indecent to demand their rights. Despite this, some women have resorted to legal action to claim their land, especially as the current digitization of land rights is exposing ambiguity and leading to property disputes among family members.

03

TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The above obstacles call for measures to challenge discriminatory attitudes, address social stigma, improve land registration processes, and promote gender equality in land ownership and decision-making. Stakeholders hold different perspectives on transformative opportunities, drawing from practices in other communities, countries, and personal transformative experiences. While many individuals feel trapped in their community's current conditions, others emphasize possible ways forward: e.g., shifting from raw material supply to processed product sales, and promoting cooperation and women's leadership. ATMP project staff recognize the importance of working with families, addressing gender dynamics, and fostering

equality and partnership. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology is seen as a helpful tool for transformation. The head of the *raion* Pasture Users Union (PUU) supports a participatory and inclusive approach, prioritizing discussions on gender-related issues.

Overall, the study highlights the complexities of land use, gender dynamics, and cultural norms within the communities, emphasizing the need for inclusive communication, addressing structural barriers, and recognizing the potential for women's active roles and decision-making in land management.

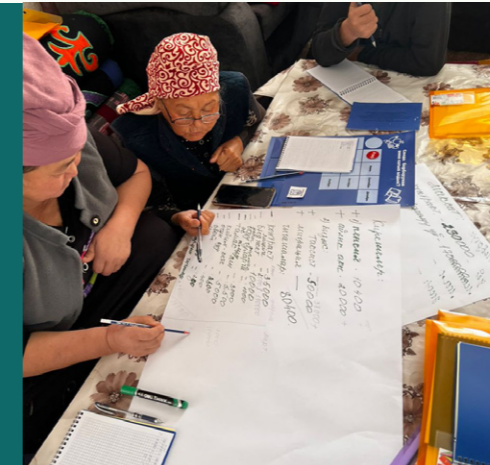


Recommendations

01



Identify priorities for equitable and sustainable land management among different groups of women and men and develop culturally acceptable strategies to address those priorities, while supporting normative changes towards greater equality.



02



Identify **multiple "entry points"** based on the priorities and values of different social groups within each community to ensure **meaningful engagement and limit resistance**.



03



Address **information and communication gaps** that fuel mistrust and limit rural women's and men's understanding of their land rights.



04



Implement transformative interventions using a **participatory action research approach** that strengthens cooperation between men and women to strengthen equality in communities.



05



Provide **well-documented case studies** of successful land use initiatives involving active participation of women in various communities to promote sustainable land practices.

06



Support existing and future **women leaders** in identifying opportunities to challenge patriarchal norms and unlocking the potential for deeper gender-transformative change.

07



Monitor change to identify how 'gender transformative' interventions, such as application of the GALS methodology, and key factors influence gender equality, and disseminate good practices based on the findings for more effective interventions.





INITIATIVE CONSORTIUM



The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) envision a more equitable world where trees in all landscapes, from drylands to the humid tropics, enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR and ICRAF are CGIAR Research Centers.



Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and malnutrition. These four interconnected global crises have put at stake the wellbeing of our planet for years. Fueled by COVID-19, their impact on agriculture, landscapes, biodiversity, and humans is now stronger than ever. Reversing this negative trend is a challenge, but also an opportunity for bold choices and integrated solutions. Established in 2019, the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) was created to address these four crises, maximizing impact for change at key points in the food system.



The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. Established in 1975, IFPRI currently has more than 600 employees working in over 50 countries. It is a research center of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development.

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