GENDER ANALYSIS UNDER "LOCAL ACTORS JOIN FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS" (JOIN) PROJECT

3/26/2013

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this research was to identify and document the ways in which gender plays a part in the value chains of rural communities in Armenia and Georgia, so as to help inform gender-oriented programming in the JOIN Project.

There is a broad consensus that gender discrimination exists on a broad range of areas in both countries. Culture and tradition play a crucial role in defining sexual division of labor in household and restricting the range of activities that women engage in, their control of resources and influence in decision making. However, while tradition may require that women take a subordinate role, practically they often take the lead.

The research included both desk research and extensive focus grouping. For the desk research we reviewed the existing literature on gender in the two countries and looked at national statistics, World Bank statistics, as well as the data from the annual regional survey, *the Caucasus Barometer*.

Our field work included focus groups and interviews in six municipalities of Georgia and six municipalities in Armenia. The ten focus groups in Georgia and eight focus groups in Armenia were attended by a total of 128 women and 19 men. We also did a small survey at the end of the each focus group in order to quantify some of the attitudes of participants, and the results are also incorporated in this report. This is not representative of the regions as a whole.

In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of different value chains, including agricultural machinery rental service, fertilizer shop, potato seeds provider, and large farms.

From our desk research we have broken-down the analysis into legislation and its enforcement, labor market participation, social attitudes on gender, migration, the role of women in politics, and biases in education. For our purposes three findings are particularly relevant from our desk research.

First, the overwhelming majority of both men and women, surveyed in both countries, think that a man should be the main bread-winner and decision maker in a household. Second, while the broad legal environment for gender equality is in place, there is little effort to enforce the legislation, leading to inequality of women in property ownership, particularly at times of divorce or death in the family. Third, and perhaps most significantly, women earn significantly less than men. They have lower levels of employment and they are employed in lower-paying sectors. Even within the same sector, they generally have more junior positions.

Our focus groups asked questions about the general structure of agricultural production and trade as well as gender differences in the activities that women engage in, their role in decision making and their access to assets and information.

Women and men have distinct roles and responsibilities in the agricultural production. Men are generally responsible for tasks that require physical brute strength (like lifting sacks), technical

knowledge or skill (like driving cars/machinery or butchering animals) or which require outside negotiations.

Women on the other hand, are responsible for the bulk of day-to-day agricultural activities including field work (including the bulk of the work collecting the harvest), milking cows, the processing of food (like cheese-making) and house-keeping, hold budget management/small sales.

In general this creates a significantly biased division of labor, where women work longer hours on agricultural activities than men. This causes some resentment amongst women, particularly because women feel that men generally interpret gender roles in their favor. For example, men are commonly prepared to let women do physically demanding work, but men would never do household chores.

Women also have very little involvement in areas of the value chain outside of the household/land-plot. As farmers, they do not negotiate with outside parties. They also almost never take the role of input suppliers, tractor drivers, veterinarians or technicians. Consistent with the general literature, while women may actually be more likely to have regular employment in rural communities, they will generally be as a teacher or nurse. Some of the value chain input providers said that they would happily hire women, but the only roles in which they currently do so are as accountants or office administrators.

Decisions are mostly made in consultations within a family but, according to both men and women, the final word is usually left to the men. Although women perform most of the agricultural tasks, when it comes to “big decisions” and “big money,” it is usually up to men.

All of that said, women have considerable practical control. First, women end up being practically responsible for the household budget most of the time. They make most of the decisions about the purchase of food, clothes and even purchases for the house. As these purchases are often done in the form of barter, this also means that the woman is deciding when to sell the home-grown and processed food.

Second, there is the general sense that women, behind closed doors, can persuade their husbands to make a particular decision. As many different focus groups recounted, ‘the man is the head, but the woman is the neck, and the neck turns the head’.

Third, in many of the focus groups, it was clear that because women are basically practically in charge of so much of the home, finance and agricultural activities, the women, of course, are responsible for considerable innovation and direction of overall farm activity.

That said, it is also clear that outside of the household the woman has to take a far more formally subordinate role. It is not acceptable, for example, for women to negotiate with individuals outside of the household, except on small issues. Also, women generally can’t drive, especially big trucks. So, even if women wanted, in many situations they could not perform the tasks that are considered “man’s work”

In some households the head is a women, this is usually because the man is working abroad. Women in these families have money sent by a husband, so they can hire labour and equipment and even make small investments in their production. However, for much of the 'man's work', even women-headed households are expected to engage a male relative where possible, particularly in negotiations with outsiders.

Monetary income is a huge problem in villages and taking loans is also difficult due to high interest rates and the risks of poor crops. As lands and harvest are not usually insured, simple drought or hail might lead to disastrous results for a farmer who has taken loans. Therefore, our focus group participants were generally only prepared to take loans if they had a non-farming source of income, with which to make repayments.

In terms of access to information, we did not identify a particularly gendered access to information. In fact, bearing in mind the intensive level of women's involvement in agricultural activities vis-a-vis men it seems likely that women know more about farming practices than men do.

However, few of them have good access to information and there is a demand for more knowledge of modern agricultural practices, from households generally. Households are eager to know more about their own lands, what to grow, what technologies to use and the right practices for looking after crops and animals, for increasing fertility, and better marketing their products.

Another area where CARE and other donors could push for positive change is by supporting the political activeness of women. In this study we encountered a very motivated and energetic woman from an Azeri village who had succeeded in improving the water provision in her local community, by fighting with the local community to secure new resources She won the battle, but was unable to pursue a political career despite the support of fellow villagers due to gendered prejudices about the role of women and the unsuitability of women for politics.

In general, therefore, we can probably generalise that our analysis of the value chain provided two very broad findings. First, women not only do most of the work, but are actually responsible for most of the day-to-day budgeting, financial management and decision making. Second, that in the public domain it is still important to both women and men, that men have the role as the main bread-winner and decision-maker.

This creates a diplomatically sensitive balance, but one that offers both challenges and opportunities for the programs. One consistent factor of our research was that women are eager to obtain new information of this kind, and despite some gender sensitivities, they are well placed to make use of it.

In particular woman's intensive involvement in most facets of agriculture mean that projects which save them time processing food (like cheese) may result in more time available for better agricultural management and marketing. Informational and training projects, targeting women in particular and conducted in a village community setting would then ensure that their time is more effectively employed. This training and information could relate to almost any area of agricultural management, from general market information on potential new crops, seed, fertiliser and pesticide use or even animal feeding and health.

Recommendations: Trying to Sensitize Projects to Gender Issues

The objective of this project was to provide an overall understanding of gender biases in the value chain, so that the CARE teams in Georgia and Armenia could ensure that their projects were able to take these biases into account when designing projects. This should allow CARE to identify strategies for overcoming the biases that exist. In its very best formulation this should allow the project to tackle the biases themselves. At the very least, this will hopefully ensure that the CARE project does not inadvertently reinforce gender-biases.

In general our findings confirm that women are a natural focus point for development work in rural communities. While both woman and men acknowledge the formal primacy of men in decision making and control over resources, our research clearly shows that practical control of small land-holdings and resources is largely left with women.

However, the fact that men expect to act as point of contact with input suppliers, service providers and information providers outside of the village, creates challenges for a project trying to reach women. Below, we will briefly review some of the thoughts that emerged during our discussion of the CARE Program and the challenges of making it sensitive to gender. The CARE team laid-out three components to the project.

- ER1: LG, CS and the private sector jointly plan and implement gender-sensitive municipal development plans for sustainable socioeconomic development

Our understanding of this project component will see the formation of groups that will have local government, civil society and the private sector involvement. These municipal working groups will have discussions to try and help identify local development priorities. It is generally expected that the "private sector" component of these groups will be represented by small farmers.

The main mechanism for gender equality suggested by the project for this component, was to ensure that the group has at least 1/3 women's participation. However, our research suggests this might have two limitations.

First, this 1/3 will almost certainly be the NGOs, rather than small farmer, as women are far more involved in leadership positions in NGOs than they are in business or in government. If one wants women farmers to participate then one will probably have to require this representation specifically.

Second, we conducted all-women focus groups and mixed-gender focus groups and found that women were far more restrained in the latter, because of their desire not to publically contradict men. This could be a problem in a discussion on regional development. An alternative strategy would be to require that some of these groups are entirely women.

- ER2: Sustainable BDICs provide market-relevant information and trainings to LG, CS and the private sector in support of strengthening local value chains (in selected fields such as agriculture)

Here it is our understanding that BDICs will provide a combination of training and information. Both of these were in severe demand by the women we spoke to. And as the group who are most

directly connected to the growing of crops, and the day-to-day tending to animals, they are natural recipients. The CARE team suggest that they could try and eliminate gender bias in this area by requiring that trainings are made-up of a certain proportion of women.

This is clearly a good approach. Also, one could offer training that relates more to what women are engaged in. However, our research did not really suggest that there are any value-chains where women are NOT active. For example, it is generally considered that men are more involved in livestock, because they tend to take responsibility for buying and selling, shepherding, dealing with vets and, where necessary, killing and butchering animals. However, women are probably more involved than men in the day-to-day care of animals, particularly milking cows.

Therefore, while there are no clear male-dominated sub-sectors of agriculture, men do generally dominate in

- Shepherding
- Killing of animals
- Veterinary
- Anything technical

As a result, training that is directed at women should most obviously focus on day-to-day animal care and horticulture. Also, it will be important to continually ensure with women who do visit the BDICs, that information provided is relevant to them.

Another challenge still remains is in ensuring that information access is provided to women. Generally, our research suggests that women are more likely to stay at home or, at least, will not be responsible for going to town to buy inputs, talk to vets or rent machinery. If this is where the information exchange is happening, then women will be excluded.

Additionally, in conservative communities, women will probably be a lot less likely to engage with an information officer or receive training, if it is provided by a man.

Therefore, following our discussion, it seems clear that the provision of information will require pro-active outreach, particularly to women. This will probably involve some kind of village or, at least, local community level participation. It could also involve provision of bus/marshutka to overcome the transportation deficit that women face.

It will also be necessary to ensure that there are at least a few woman BDIC information officers. And it is probably better to use local CSOs for community contact than village trustees, as these are mostly men. Finding women to work as information officers initially seems challenging, as it can be hard to find women who are technically trained in the appropriate areas. However, after discussions, it seems clear that the role of the information officers probably wont be to provide knowledge directly, but to connect farmers to people who can provide that knowledge. Similarly, community meetings can be used as outreach for women. This role, it seems, can be played by a woman, probably from a CSO.

- ER3: Institutionalised coordination mechanisms between national and involved local stakeholders are established to effectively address local socioeconomic development needs

In this final element, the objective was, again, to ensure involvement of women in the networks. Again, this is a good start. However, the key challenge is to help women act as agents of change in the first place. Our research suggested they already do play this role, but up against considerable prejudice and institutional barriers like their continued need to work the land-plot and perform domestic duties.

One mechanism for alleviating some of these problems will, therefore, be to simply remove some of the worst time constraints from women. The project is already seeking to do that with the support of milk collection centers. Our work suggests that this time-saving may generate not only economic but also possibly political benefits.

Methodology

The research process took part in January-February, 2013. The first phase looked at gender issues in Georgia generally. To do this, we reviewed the existing literature and looked at national statistics in both countries, World Bank statistics, as well as the data from the annual regional survey, *the Caucasus Barometer*. Before forming discussion guides and questionnaires, we also had semi-structured interviews with experts and practitioners from the field.

Our field work included focus groups and interviews in six municipalities of Georgia and six municipalities in Armenia. The ten focus groups in Georgia and eight focus groups in Armenia were attended by a total of 147 persons in total.

Six focus groups in Armenia and seven focus groups in Georgian consisted of only women. In order to achieve higher level of openness and honesty all women-only focus groups had female moderators. For comparison, we also had two mixed groups in Armenia and three mixed groups in Georgia. As we expected, the dynamics of interaction was very different in women's focus groups than in the mixed focus groups.

One focus group in Georgia was conducted exclusively for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In Georgia, the focus groups were conducted in Georgian, Armenian and Russian, depending upon which language was easier for the ethnic group having the discussion. In Armenia, all interviews were conducted in Armenian.

We did a small survey at the end of the each focus group in order to quantify some of the attitudes of participants, and the results are also incorporated in this report. This was not, of course, a representative survey, but may offer some indicative insights. The emphasis on focus groups was driven by the need to capture complex and nuanced information and provided a more textured and causal account than a survey would have been able to.

In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of different value chains, including agricultural machinery rental service, fertilizer shop, potato seeds provider, and large farms.

Desk Research on Gender in Georgia and Armenia

General overview

There are a range of cross-cutting issues that work to mutually reinforce gender differences in the two countries. Gender roles can be discussed in many aspects, but because the aim of CARE's join project is focused on economic cooperation and development, we will focus our discussion below on the issues of legislation and its enforcement, labor market participation, social attitudes on gender, migration, the role of women in politics, and biases in education.

In general, the situation in Armenia and Georgia is comparable. In international rankings which assess gender issues both countries score similarly. In the UN Gender Inequality index, both countries are in the top-half of listed countries, but in most other rankings, both countries are

usually significantly below the midpoint. The table below summarizes the four most important rankings:

Figure 1: Rankings of Armenia and Georgia in various reports on gender issue

Metric	Georgia's rank	Armenia's rank	Total number of countries
UN Gender Inequality Index (GII)	73	60	187
World Economic Forum gender gap index (GGI)	85	92	135
Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)	60	64	86
OECD Women's economic opportunity index	67	57	113

Legislation

If one simply looks at the broad legal context of gender relations in the two countries the situation looks good at all levels. However, problems with enforcement mean that the law is often ignored.

Both countries' constitutions have a clear non-discrimination clause related to sex (The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia; The Constitution of Georgia) and both have ratified almost all relevant international conventions related to gender (Economic Development and Research Center, 2010).

The national legislation also looks good. Georgia adopted the law on Gender Equality in 2010 (The law on Gender Equality), and Armenia has "The Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015."

However, commentators in both countries have noted that there are few processes in place to ensure the implementation of the laws, and few resources or inadequate outreach in both countries (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010; Bendeliani, 2012).

As a result, gender-biased traditions often persist, even where they are legally prohibited. For instance, Georgian law guarantees equal inheritance rights of family property, but, as Tamar Sabedashvili summarizes, "In practice, women have fewer rights than men in the division of inherited property" (Sabedashvili, 2007). Instead, tradition usually gives women the status of "secondary-heirs".

In Armenia as well, property distribution is a problematic family issue, especially, during divorce. As Elisabeth Duban explains, "Although the law considers property obtained during marriage to be commonly owned by the spouses, in reality high-value property may be officially registered in the name of a husband's family member, leaving the woman with limited claims" (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

Gender differences are also generally greater in lower income families as economic dependence and the woman's likely unawareness of her legal rights, places women in subordinate position to men.

As the Duban further explains, "in general, due to their lower economic status women are more likely to lack the financial resources to hire private attorneys and this may impact their abilities to seek justice and obtain redress for wrongs" (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010). Women and Labor Market

Labor participation

One of the main themes of the gender literature is the involvement of women in the work-place and their relative remuneration for work. An overwhelming amount of research shows that women tend to work in lower-paying sectors and in lower positions than women. In addition, it suggests that women earn less, even when they are doing exactly the same job.

In 2010 women's average monthly nominal wage was 64 percent of men's earnings in Armenia (National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2010) and 57% in Georgia. A USAID commissioned Gender Assessment in Armenia suggests that pay inequalities "are explained by the fact that women are underrepresented in profitable and high paying sectors, whereas fields in which women dominate, such as education and healthcare, have the lowest salaries" (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010)

If we start by looking at the concentration of women in different parts of the wage-earning work-force we can see there is considerable concentration in certain areas.

Figure 2: Employment by profession by Gender in Georgia and Armenia

Employment area	**Share of women employed in the sector**		**Average monthly earnings**
	Georgia	**Armenia**	**Georgia (GEL)**
Construction	7%	2%	1022
Transport/communication	8%	17%	974
Energy	19%	17%	N/A
Manufacturing	27%	34%	735
Real Estate	38%	28%	662
Education, Healthcare/social assistance	80-85%	82%	Education – 416 Health and social work- 582

Sources: Geostat, Armstat

The pattern of horizontal segregation goes hand in hand with stereotypical gender roles. The picture is similar in both countries. Technical professions are “masculinized,” while caring/rearing professions are “feminized”.

Moreover, the same USAID report notes that desegregation of various industries has not positively impacted women’s situation, “as wages in the service sector have increased, more men have found employment there, and women have been pushed from the banking sphere as salaries increase” (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

However, women make less than men even in the industries where women dominate. Thus, in the education sector women’s average monthly nominal wage in 2011 was 81 percent of what men made, and 75 percent in health and social work sector (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

In the field of agriculture, where women are also over-represented, their average monthly income is 58% of what men earn. Self-employed women in the trade sector earn monthly an average of 68% of men’s equivalent earnings” (Sabedashvili, 2007).

Concentration of women in low-paid jobs was also caused by the worsening of economic situation during the transition period. In Georgia, for example, it seems as though when many Georgian families appeared on the borders of extreme poverty, women were more prepared to accept ‘menial’ jobs like cleaning or child-care, with minimum remuneration in the less profitable sectors of economy.

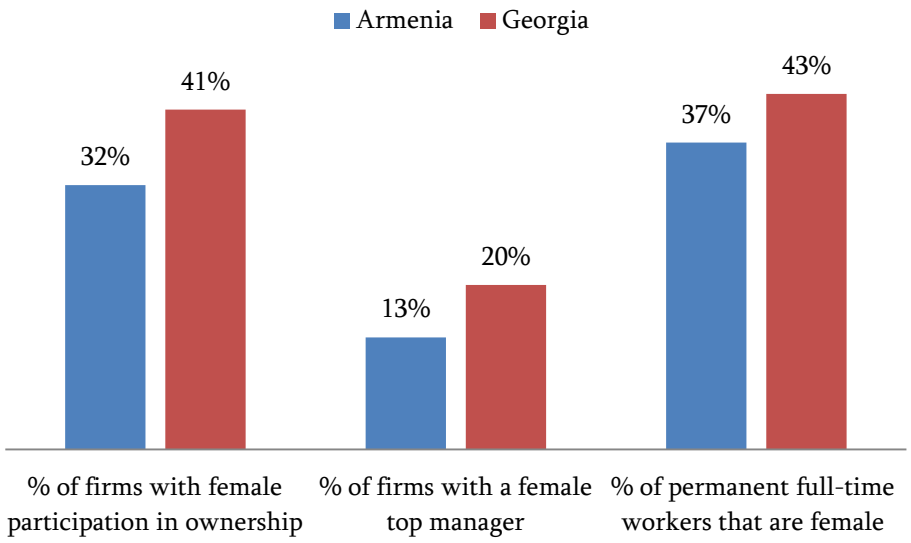
A study commissioned by the OSCE in 2007 in Armenia found that male networks in business and politics also serve “as an instrument to avoid the authorities and their interference in men’s businesses”. Therefore, men were in a position to take illegal advantages, not available to women. This also made women dependent on men, as a “prerequisite to move forward in business or in politics” (Wistrand, 2007).

Women, in general, are less involved in economic activities and labor force compared to men. According to official statistics, 55% of women and 73% of men are economically active both in Armenia and Georgia (National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2010) (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

According to the World Bank Group’s Enterprise survey (2007) female participation in in firm ownership, and in management is lower in Armenia than in most other ECA countries. 32% of women have some kind of ownership role in Armenia and 41% in Georgia (World Bank Group, 2011). However, this probably overstates the situation, as male business owners often register their businesses under their female relatives’ or wives’ names (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

The table below shows the levels of participation in ownership, management and general participation.

Figure 3: Female participation in ownership and workforce across sector



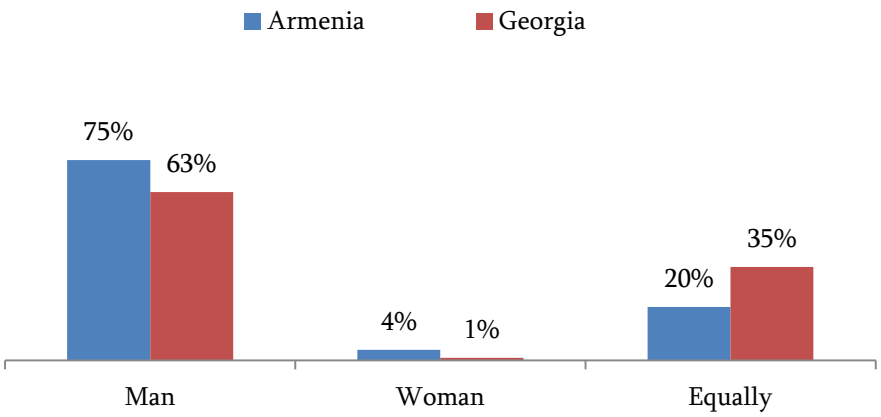
Source: Enterprise Surveys, 2008-2009 data

According to the USAID report, one of the main constraints for women small business owners in Armenia is limited access to credit. Women have particular problem in this regards if the property is registered under the husband's name. Duban also suggests that interest rates may be higher for women (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010).

Perceptions of Gender Roles

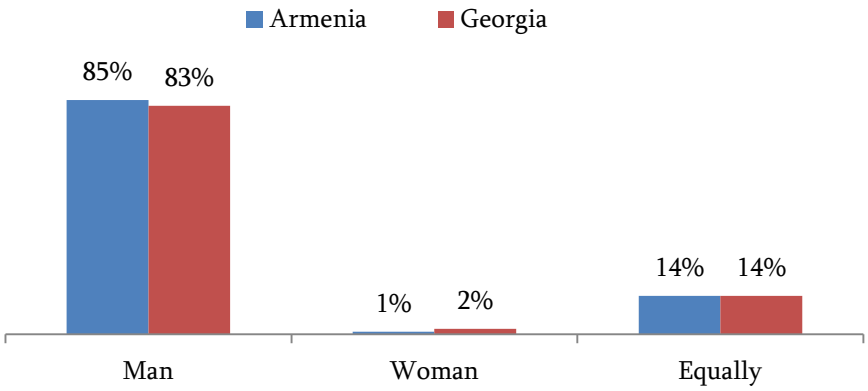
Perceptions and stereotypes remain significant problem in Armenia and Georgia. Below we present data from the Caucasus Barometer, a cross-country yearly survey which includes questions on range of social issues, many of them relevant to a discussion of gender (Caucasus Research Resource Centers , 2010/2011)

Figure 4: Who should be the family decision-maker in the family?



Source: CRRC Caucasus Barometer 2010 (Armenia and Georgia)

Figure 5: Who should be breadwinner in the family?



Source: CRRC Caucasus Barometer 2010 (Armenia and Georgia)

As we can see, while there is a significant minority who express the desire for equality in household power and in earning contribution. The overwhelming majority believe that men should be the main decision makers and that they should earn the main salary. Almost no-one (in a survey that was 50% women) believed that women should be in charge.

Migration

According to the Caucasus Barometer survey, which is conducted every year in South Caucasus countries, 50% of Georgians and 68% of Armenians say that they have a family member living abroad (Caucasus Research Resource Centers , 2010/2011).

In the 90s most migration was men going to work, usually for manual labor to Russia. More recently demand has grown for "feminine" jobs such as nursing and daycare for elderly. The 2000s saw a rise in this feminisation of migration, particularly in Georgia. While these migrant women are technically breadwinners, sometimes supporting several families, they are still disproportionately underrepresented in terms of family decision-making.

Seasonal labor migration has created a change of gender roles in both countries. In Armenia, the traditional form of seasonal migration sees men leaving to Russia to work and leaving women to take care of the household. This happens in Georgia too, but generally it is less common, as the feminization of migration in Georgia has increasingly sent women abroad.

Migration of men also creates a range of problems for women. First, when men are the migrants, then the women left behind may face a range of challenges. Second, seasonal migrants can cause higher risks of STDs, as migrant men engage in unsafe sex abroad.

Women in Power

Women are underrepresented in the government and decision-making structures in both Georgia and Armenia. Women participation is low on national, sub-national, and household level.

Since the independence in 1991, women have never achieved more than nine percent representation in the Parliament in Armenia and 13% in Georgia, and most of these were elected through a proportional vote.

Even this level of participation is attributed to electoral code amendment that raised the quota for women on the party list from five percent to 15 percent (Duban, Elisabeth; DevTech Systems, Inc., 2010). But women were usually put in the lower parts of the list and in 2011, only eight percent of the MPs were female.

Civic and political involvement has been particularly low in Kvemo Kartli. The study conducted by the Mercy Corps' "Alliances against Poverty" project shows that "that none of the focus group participants regardless of their ethnic origin had ever participated in village councils or other gatherings, where community problems were discussed and decided" (Mercy Corps, 2011).

On a family level, perception in local communities is that men and women are equally involved in family management. According to the report prepared by the Civil Development Agency (CiDA), about 66% of respondents in their survey said that men and women should have equal rights in a family. In the same study, however, 13% of the interviewees said that expenditure planning is "a woman's job," while 23% said that it was the responsibility of the man (Civil Development Agency, 2011).

Education

The literature suggests that while access to education may not be a problem, the educational systems produces and perpetuates gender bias through the limited role of women in the management of education and gender-biased textbooks.

On the face of it, women do well in schools, in Georgia and Armenia. Results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 report shows that females perform

better than males at schools in Georgia in all three major indicators of PISA – reading, mathematics, and science.

Figure 6: Basic education statistics for gender

	Armenia	Georgia
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	100	100
Literacy rate, youth male (% of males ages 15-24)	100	100
Ratio of female to male primary enrollment (%)	102	103
Ratio of female to male secondary enrollment (%)	102	95
Ratio of female to male tertiary enrollment (%)	128	125
Ratio of young literate females to males (% ages 15-24)	100	100

Source: World Bank Data, Gender statistics, 2010

A UNICEF report suggests that access to education may be more problematic for ethnic Azeris in Georgia.

> Although gender-disaggregated data on education enrollments ethnic minorities was not available, several NGOs reported their observations of decreasing education enrolment among girls in Azeri communities, where attitudes regarding women's roles have grown more conservative during the transition period. For women, this has meant a reassertion of a more traditional role of caring for the family and rearing children, which undoubtedly affects girls' education opportunities (Silova, 2004).

While the majority of teachers are women, the majority of school and university management are men. Women are overrepresented in the pedagogical staff of secondary schools. According to the EDRC research in Armenia in 2010, 82.2 percent of teachers in public secondary schools and 84.9 percent of teachers in private schools were women. At the same time, however, only 1 out of 3 school principals in the country were women (one out of two principals is female in Yerevan).

According to the same study, the more important institutions have progressively lower levels of female management. Thus, only 25 percent of the public colleges were headed by women. Moreover, while the academic staff of the universities is quite gender-balanced, only 2 out of 23 public universities are headed by a woman (Economic Development and Research Center, 2010).

Analysis of school textbooks in Georgia has suggested that they also perpetuate gender stereotypes. A UNICEF study suggested that

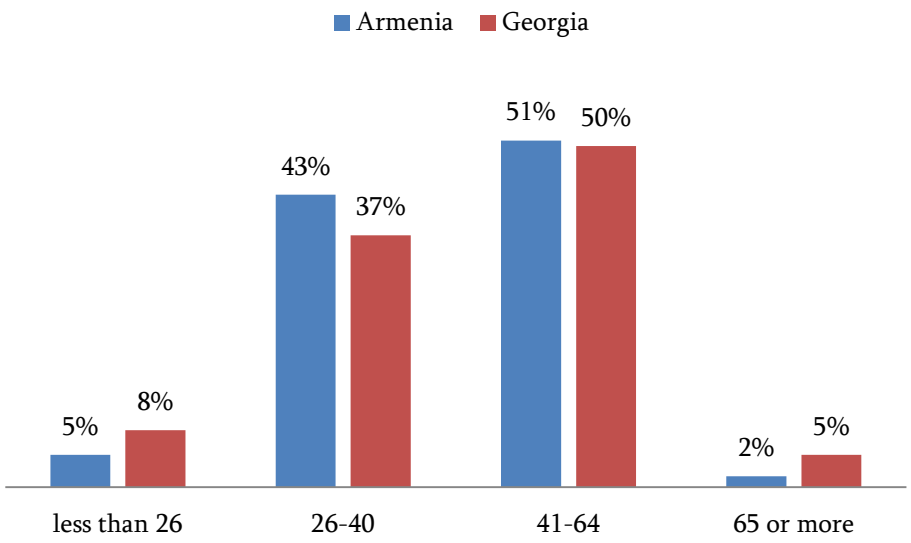
> females are usually portrayed in a narrowly defined domestic context, usually engaged in such activities as taking care of children, cooking, knitting, sewing, washing dishes, cleaning the house, laying the table, and watering flowers. Males, on the other hand, are commonly portrayed as reading, playing, dancing, singing, hiking, catching butterflies, and going to school. (…) In higher grades, the World Bank's initial content analysis of the proposed curriculum for history suggested that sufficient attention was not given to the historical contribution of women to society (Silova, 2004).

Therefore, it has been argued that in the region neither school nor university level education promote gender equality.

Profile of focus group participants

We surveyed 147 participants in 18 focus groups for this report. 10 focus groups were conducted in Georgia and 84 persons participated. In Armenia, there were 8 focus groups in total with 63 participants. In total there were 128 female and 19 male participants. Below is the age-distribution of focus group participants:

Figure 7: Age composition by country



Both in Armenia and in Georgia, about half of the participants were aged between 40 and 60. This is the most active part of population when it comes to agricultural activities.

Agricultural activities in targeted regions

Production of agricultural goods

Agricultural production patterns vary across the 12 targeted municipalities, but the majority of the FG participants in all locations explained that agriculture is not a profitable venture. Most of the participants, except the few larger farmers, used a large part of their production for their own consumption.

We asked in our questionnaire to list the three most important agricultural activities. Below is the break-down by municipalities:

Figure 8: Agricultural activities in targeted municipalities

Municipality	Product	Share of FG participants with such activity
Akhalkalaki	Potato	85%
	Milk	11%
	Fruit-vegetables	4%
Ninotsminda	Potato	60%
	Milk	30%
	Wheat	10%
Dmanisi	Potato	84%
	Cattle	5%
	Bean	5%
Gardabani	Maize	54%
	Pig	15%
	Broom	8%
Marneuli	Tomato	33%
	Bean	20%
	Potato	13%
Amasia	Milk	60%
	Potato	13%
	Meat	13%
Azatan	Potato	100%
Berd	Grape	21%
	Fruit-vegetables	21%
	Cow	7%
Noyemberyan	Potato	36%
	Milk	36%
	Apple	9%
Stepanavan	Milk	89%
	Wheat	11%
Tashir	Milk	100%

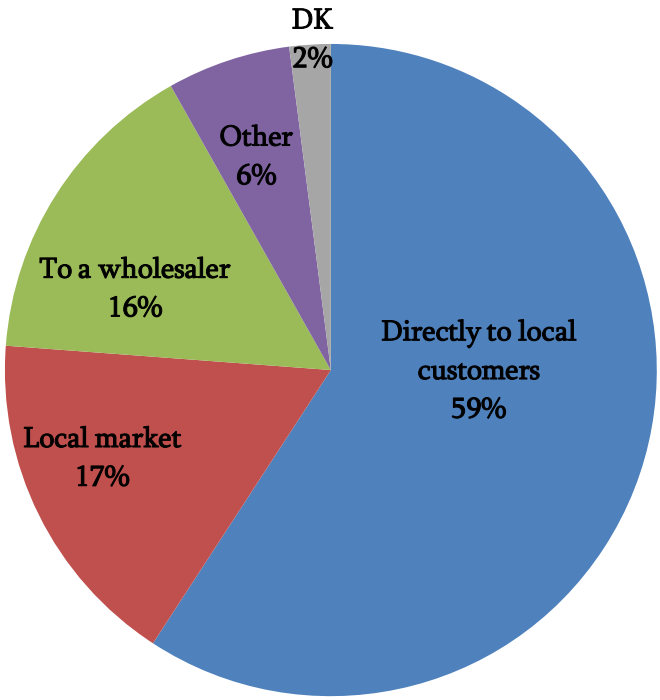
As can be seen from the table, in Samtkshe-Javakheti, potatoes and milk are most popular. In Kvemo Kartli it varies from potatoes in Dmanisi to maize in Gardabani and tomatoes in Marneuli. In most targeted municipalities of Armenia, it is predominantly milk and potatoes as well, with the exception of Berd where grapes and fruits/vegetables are more popular.

Processing of the agricultural products, with some differences between the Armenian Marzes and Georgian regions, is ultimately very limited. Products are primarily processed for household consumption and not sale.

Trading agricultural goods

Most of the products are sold locally. Participants across all the FGs complained that either there is no market for them to sell the products or the cost of transportation to markets is too high.

Figure 9: Where do you sell your agricultural products?



For most farmers, it doesn't even make sense to take products to the municipality center. Taking agricultural products to Akhalkalaki or Akhaltsikhe requires time and transportation costs, as well as other expenditures, such as the cost of lunch. A participant from Ninotsminda tried to explain the mathematical reasoning behind this

> *For example, potatoes cost 38 tetri at the market, while in my village I sell them for 30 tetri … 8 tetri will not be enough to hire a truck and take potatoes to the market*." Added to this, farmers would have to spend time and effort to take their products to the market.

A woman participant in Akhalkalaki said: *"If, for example, I have to buy furniture or a refrigerator, then it will make sense for my family to take potatoes to Tbilisi and try to sell there … it's not worth the effort to travel such a long distance simply to sell potatoes."*

According to focus group participants, the buyers mostly dictate the prices. Milk producers in Shirak and Tashir, as well as in Ninotsminda, sell the milk to the factories. Prices for milk are usually set in the village, and the money is given after about two weeks.

Women are in charge of this transaction. In general, women are in charge of smaller transactions, particularly of products that they produce/process. This kind of activity is not, however, exclusively performed by women.

Men are usually in charge of larger sales, such as meat, cattle and transactions that involve large sums of money. Again, it is more acceptable for the women to engage in larger transactions if the husband is abroad, or if there are no men in the household.

It is interesting that main form of trade is bartering of agricultural goods. Usually, someone comes to a village with a big truck of sugar and flour, and trades these products for potatoes or other products produced locally. Focus group participants said that, of course, traders sell flour or sugar at higher prices than they would on the market. Nevertheless, it is convenient for small local farmers as they don't have cash.

Bartering is especially intensive in summer, when demand is low and supply is high. Usually, people store their products at home and when somebody comes to a village they sell the products to them. This makes storage an essential part of the village economy. As a result, IDPs in Gardabani, are at a significant disadvantage. All IDP households were allocated small land plots in different parts of Gardabani. However, as they live in apartment blocks, there is no storage facility for them to store their harvest. This has been one of the main complains of IDPs since their resettlement in Kvemo Kartli in 2008-2009. Because of this, IDPs have to sell their agricultural products directly from their land plots. As one IDP explained in a focus group,

> *It would be good to store products for some time and sell them when prices are high … but we can't do this … we cannot put potatoes in our flats … We have asked the government to help with this, but the issue remains unaddressed.*

Storage can be an important asset for local farmers. They can collect and store their harvest, and sell at higher price in smaller quantities, or just wait for good price.

Women take active part in selling products from the home. The focus group participants said that usually *"whoever is at home, sells agricultural products to people who come."* In Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki municipalities, where men are often in Russia for work, women take the lead on selling their products at home.

Azeri communities seem to operate slightly differently. It is men who take lead in selling their agricultural products, but with considerable participation of women. A few women provided details of the process *"men talk to the people who come to our house about the sale… often they can't negotiate properly and are too obstinate… in such cases we tell them, quietly, to lower the price and sell."*

In households where the men are gone for work abroad, women naturally take greater responsibility. Seasonality of agricultural production and Russian industrial work coincide so that this category of men are only in Georgia/Armenia in winter when there are almost no agricultural activities taking place. But they often send money to their home and participate in making decisions, even from a distance.

Loans and credits

People are generally cautious about getting loans or credits, although accessibility doesn't seem to be a problem. One focus group participant from Ninotsminda gave her account of how the situation has changed: *"5-6 years ago people would take loans neighbors or relative, banks weren't that popular… but now banks are everywhere and taking credits is easy… they even come to you and ask to take credits."* Accessibility of credits, however, has not changed high interest rates.

There are two popular types of credits which farmers can take. The first one is an agricultural credit, which is designed for farmers who do have seasonal cash-flow. In most of these schemes, farmers are free from making payments for the first few months. In this period, they are supposed to buy all the input which they require. Payment time comes when there is a harvest. The second type of credit which farmers sometimes take is consumer loans.

Generally we found that the people in our focus groups did not take bank loans and, where they did, they preferred consumer credits to agricultural loans. The first reason for this is price, interest rates on agricultural credits are usually very high, at 35-45% per year (though it's often marketed to farmers as 3% per month). Consumer loans are repaid on a monthly basis and interest rates are usually much lower than agricultural loans, somewhere between 18% and 24%.

The second problem is that while the repayment plan of agricultural loans seems like a clever solution to the seasonality of agricultural cash-flow, the FG participants saw it as risky. The repayment of a loan depends on a successful harvest. However there is no insurance instrument for farmers and hail, drought, or other natural disaster can destroy their harvest. As a result, farmers might not be able to pay back the loan and so, lose the land plots and real estate to the bank.

However, consumer loans require some steady cash income and so were generally only taken out by those few households with employment or those receiving remittances. Interestingly, if the household has a regular cash income, other than remittances, it is most likely provided by a woman as most of the employed persons in villages are women, in schools, medicine and small retail.

Gender segmentation along value chains

Division of roles between men and women

Women and men have distinct roles and responsibilities in the agricultural production. Men are generally responsible for tasks that require physical brute strength (like lifting sacks), technical knowledge or skill (like driving cars/machinery or butchering animals) or which require outside negotiations.

Women on the other hand, are responsible for domestic chores, the bulk of field work (including the bulk of the work collecting the harvest), milking cows, the processing of food (like cheese-making) and day-to-day household budget management/small sales.

However, interestingly, when directly asked whether there is a distribution of roles in agricultural production, the participants mostly said no" *"If there is a need, you don't say it is a men's job, it is a women's job. Whoever has the time, does the work"* (Akhalkalaki, male).

But, when prompted, the majority of the participants identified tasks in production that were predominantly done by men and those done by women. Men are predominantly responsible for heavy manual labor and tasks involving equipments. Milking the cows, weeding and cultivating the

adjacent lands are considered women's work. The participants explained the role separation as the result of differences in mentality as well as physical fitness of men to do the heavier tasks. Gender stereotypes, in general, were more prevalent among the participants in Shirak Marz and SJ.

Men and women participants of virtually all focus groups agreed that women do about 70-80% of household work at home, such as cleaning, washing, ironing, and cooking. But women are also expected to do the bulk of field-work activities, such as collecting harvest and milking cows.

Different areas of the agricultural sector are considered the responsibility of different genders. It is generally accepted that meat-related activities are a man's job, while dairy should be taken care of by women. One male focus groups participant (Georgian in Dmanisi) had his own small milk factory. He described the nature of his business:

> *I have a small business; I collect milk and make cheese… I go to villages to collect milk and bring to my house, where I have the necessary equipment… then my wife makes cheese and I take it to a wholesaler to the market."*

This is a common division. A woman looks after the cows and makes cheese, but the man takes care of transportation and marketing.

Jobs which require physical force, such as lifting heavy potato bags, are usually performed by men. But physically demanding tasks, like collecting potatoes, are generally considered women's work as long at they don't actually require brute strength.

In essence, while some physically demanding work is performed by women, men almost never do "women job."

Women are limited to "small business" and "small money" because they generally do not have driving license and, even if they did, driving of truck will not be considered as "women's job".

Perception of unfairness of distribution of work would come up in women-only focus groups, regardless of ethnic composition. A quote from a Ninotsminda female participant: *"… if we [women] can lift heavy buckets, then why men can't help us in our performing our tasks."*

Another participant from the focus-group went further *"we are not women anymore… we work so much on the land that there is no time to feel like a woman… to look after ourselves and look better."*

Usually men are in charge of important agricultural activities, such as supervising harvesting process. If a land plot is big and the harvest is good, external laborers may be hired and these will be the responsibility of the man to manage. However, in practice, the labor force is often predominantly female. If this is the case, then the main women in the household will directly supervise hired labor (because they are women) and liaise with them.

Entrepreneurship is problematic for women. When we asked focus group members in Dmanisi if there were any hurdles to female entrepreneurship, they all said no. But later, while elaborating on the issue, it turned out that very few women actually happen to be entrepreneurs.

It is clear that economic empowerment is associated with decision-making rights in the family. Accordingly, cultural constraints keep women on low-paid feminized jobs like school-teachers and low-skilled positions in value-chains like potato-collectors and cheese producers. As one man said, *"If a woman has a husband and she is an entrepreneur, then who is the head of the family?"*.

We interviewed different value chain representatives, such as owners of fertilizer shops or machinery rentals about the role of women in their profession. Although women are employed in some agricultural companies, their work is usually limited to office/accounting tasks. An owner of a fertilizers and seeds shop in Akhalkalaki said: "*we have two women employed here at the office... it would be hard for a woman to work like us – we have to travel to villages often and meet local population there... in our business, women are more suitable for office work."*

But if there were qualified women, all respondents said that they would happily employ them. Here is what owner of a machinery rental service said in Akhalkalaki:

"...there is a huge problem of qualified tractor drivers ... if anybody learns some skills, then they prefer to buy their own tractor rather than working on somebody else ... I remember, in Soviet times, there were some women tractor drivers as well... don't know what and why exactly it happened, but there are no women tractor drivers any more ... if there were qualified women, then I would gladly employ them... the society wouldn't have problem of accepting such cases either, as everybody remembers that we had women drivers back in the past."

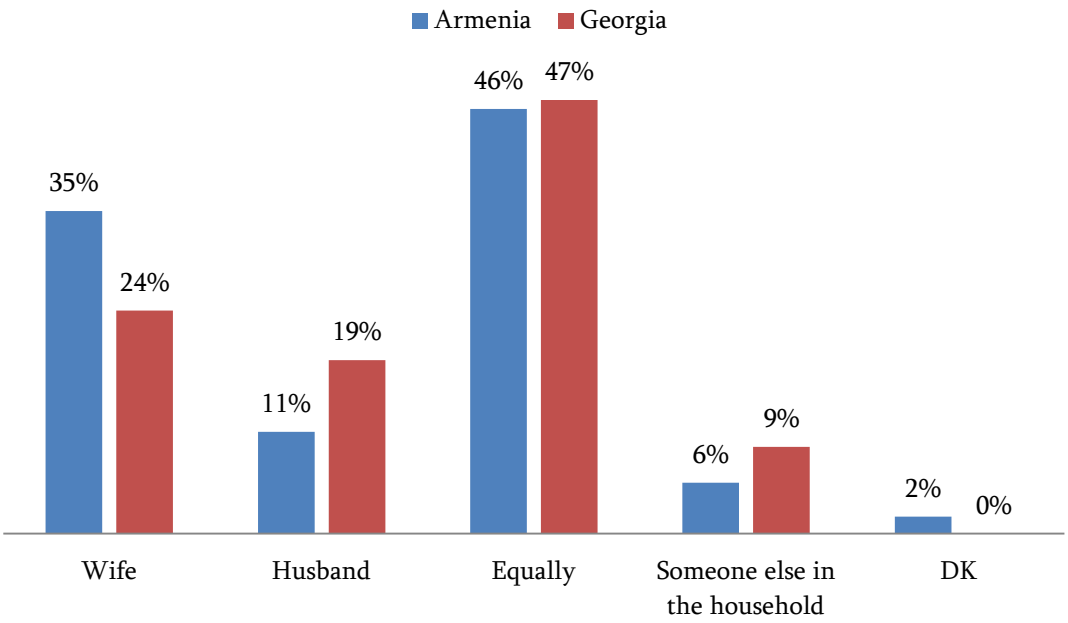
Gender impact on decision making

When one simply enquires about decision making in the household, the situation seems to be fairly balanced and women routinely argue that they have at least as much decision-making power on day to day issues as men. However, in focus group discussions, what becomes clear is that the while smaller, routine decisions are usually left to women, larger, less frequent and more unusual decisions are discussed within the household but ultimately decided by the men.

Nonetheless, women in Georgia and Armenia often see their influence as a subtle one. In focus-groups in Ninotsminda, Dmanisi, and Gardabani, participants gave almost exactly the same quote about the role of a woman in family: *"Of course, man is a head of a family, but woman is a neck… so she can turn the head to whichever direction she pleases."*

In the mini survey of focus group participants we asked who the principle decision maker is:

Figure 10: Who makes principle agricultural decisions in your household



As one can see, in both Armenia and in Georgia, almost half of focus group participants claimed that when it comes to what crops to grow and other agricultural activities, men and women participate equally in the decision-making process. Around a quarter to a third of respondents thought that the decisions were, more often, made by women.

In discussions in the focus groups, however, it became clear that big decisions, are made by the men. Even those whose husbands are abroad, still consult with them before major decisions. If anything, several focus group participants were worried about taking too much responsibility. For example, one woman said, *"The woman does not want to be responsible. If something does not work out, she will be blamed for it. It's better for the man to decide"* (Ninotsminda, female).

Another said, "If I decide, then I will be responsible for doing all the work. The decision should be made together, so we both equally work" (Ninotsminda, female).

On financial issues we see a similar pattern of decision making. In a family, women tend to deal with relatively small scale matters, while big decisions are up to men. It is also accepted that women know more about everyday family needs, such as what clothes are necessary for children, what food they need to buy, or what piece of household appliance would be good in a family. *" of course, women know better what does a household need… men don't know what clothes children have, for example… so, we often buy such things."*

We see a similar pattern of responses in who decided what agricultural products to sell and what to buy.

Figure 11: Who in the household makes the principle decisions on where and for how much agricultural product should be sold?

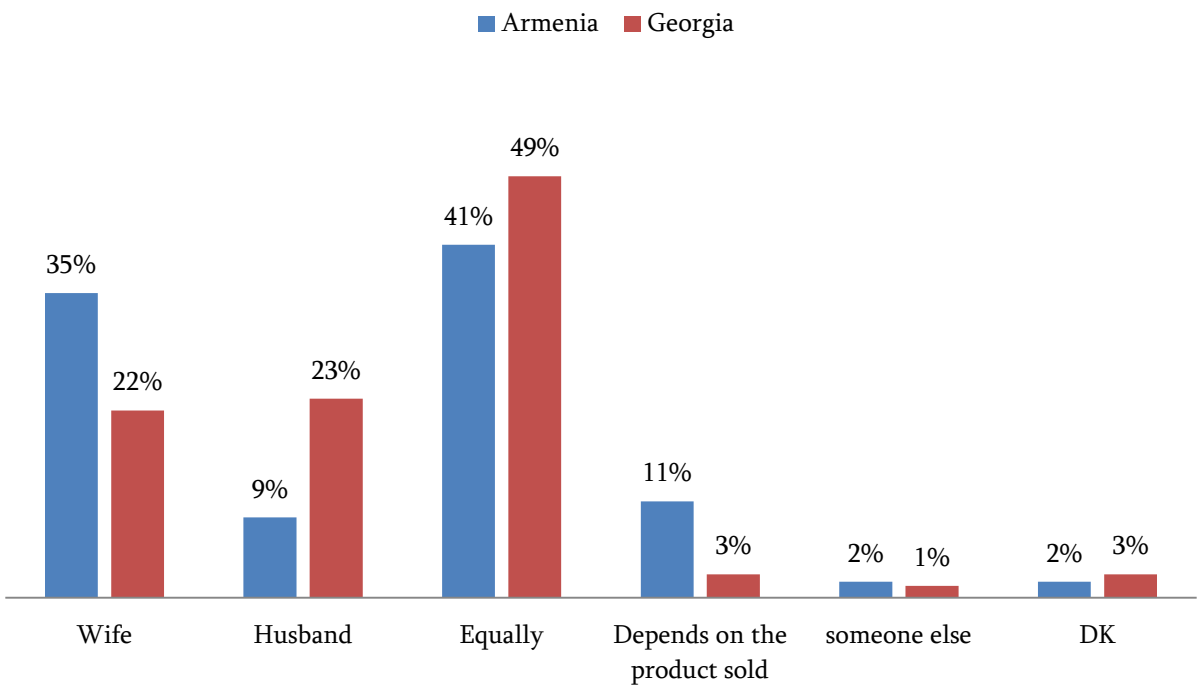
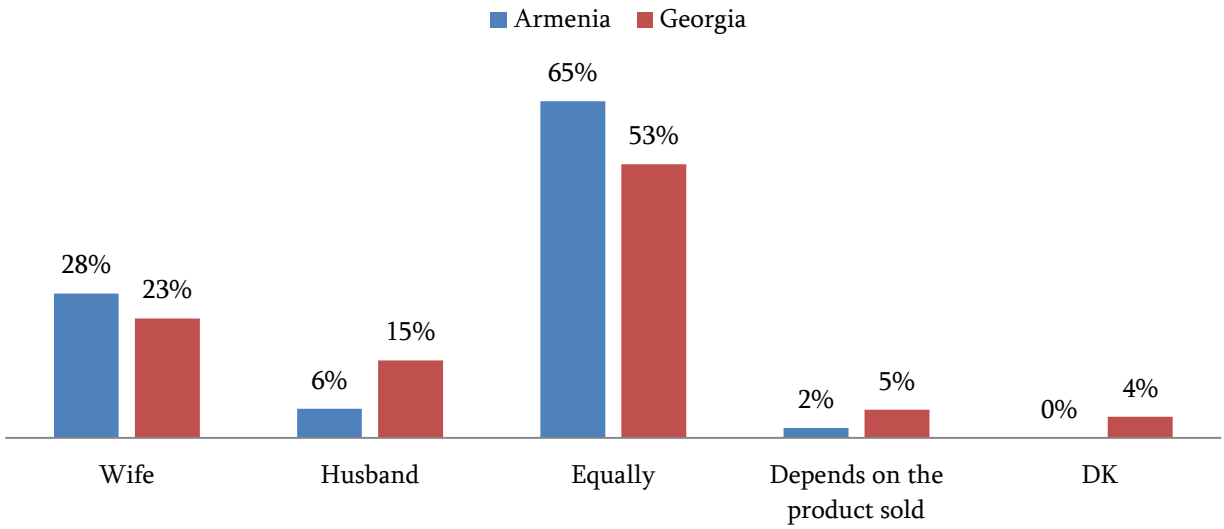


Figure 12: Who decides how to spend money in your household?



Again, the first thing to note in both instances is that half of all women see both as a joint decision. However, the fact that women are seen as, if anything, the prime decision makers in this area, again reflects their importance in day-to-day decision making and household accounts. Since sale of goods is often driven by what the household needs to buy (particularly as they exchange will probably be a barter of some kind) then women have a strong influence over both.

Most decisions are made jointly. As one woman explained, *"Decisions on spending money should be discussed in the family, so the if something goes wrong it is not just one person's fault"* (Amasia,

male). But often, this "joint discussion" had a qualifier, "*After the discussions the last word is after men"* (Noyemberyan, male, 52).

In general, there is a pattern of strong mutual accountability. Women and men know on what their income is being spent and often consult each other. When it comes to smaller issues, such as clothes for children or groceries, then women act independently and they don't need approval from a husband.

Woman from all places also often act as a sort of bank at home, having a function of collecting money. One woman participant in Akhalkalaki said *" when my husband earns money, he brings all the money to me to store… then, when money is needed for a particular thing, I give it to him."* It's interesting that many focus group participants noted that men are more spend thrift than women and can't be trusted to keep money. One woman gave a funny characterization of her husband: *"he is very kind… so if he has money, he has to distribute to anybody who asks for it… so, how can I trust money to him? I'm the one in family who keeps money and control its efficient use."*

In decision making over what to grow and plant, the gender division is generally that women decide how to tend the crops, if they are small, and the men take responsibility for larger items like animals. However, many of the focus groups suggested that women are actually more entrepreneurial and provide a lot of the energy for business expansion. Different women expressed this in a range of ways

"If it was up to our men we wouldn't be doing anything" (Ninotsminda, female).

"My husband doesn't want to breed cattle, but I have a sense of pride. Our children need to drink milk, why should I pay to buy the milk from someone else?" (Azatan, female).

"Women are the 'doping' [as in the performance enhancing drug]" (Amasia, female).

"If it was left to my dad, we would rather sell all the cattle. If my mom and I weren't telling him, we wouldn't have anything. Women always want to have more" (Amasia, female).

However the official role of men in making the major decisions can definitely lead to the exclusion of entrepreneurial women. A Georgian participant said in the Marneuli female Focus Group:

> *There is an authoritarian rule at home from my father … From early ages, I was very interested in trying things, like cross-breeding different plants… but whatever I did, my father and brothers disregarded, even if I suggested something practical as opposed to do nothing… They are not interested in my initiatives. They take as embarrassment if I do some technical stuff. I do have skills but they don't appreciate my efforts"*

There was another participant from the same focus group, who said that she has great ideas about selling agricultural products from her home, but husband doesn't want to do it or is occupied with other tasks and she, as a woman, is hesitant in taking initiative and taking products to the market.

Men are generally in charge of anything that looks like formal negotiations. For example, they are in charge of making arrangements with the tractor drivers, or the vets, even if women thought they could do this better than the men. This was explained by the fact that women should not deal with men (supporting service providers are predominantly men). Women would arrange or negotiate services only when the men were abroad and even this was very rare. Generally women would rather ask their male relatives to do so on their behalf.

This particular division was expressed strongly by several focus groups and interviews.

"Men generally call me to arrange for tractor services. I only get calls from women from the families where men are gone to seasonal work" (Amasia, male (tractor owner).

"My husband wouldn't mind if I called and negotiated with the tractor driver, for example, but the tractor driver would be surprised that a woman is calling him, because it is just not a common practice" (Noyemberyan, female).

"As long as I am around, it [making arrangement with service providers] is not a women's job, no matter how good she might be at negotiations. If there is a seller by the door, she should still call me. If I am not at home, she should discuss with the elders of the house – the grandmother or the grandfather" (Amasia, male).

"There is a father, a brother; she should call them to make the arrangements for her. It is not acceptable for the Armenian men to allow his wife to negotiate deals" (Amasia, male).

"When you bring the grain with the driver, sitting next to him, it is an unpleasant scene. People will say, she is sitting next to the driver while the husband is at home" (Azatan, female).

Gender impact on access to assets

Access to agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers and machinery, is usually dealt by men. Women strongly feel that men should deal with these issues. A female focus group participant in Dmanisi said "*Why do I need a man at home if he can't even talk to a tractor driver."*

We were also interested to find out whether females in targeted regions had formal rights/ownership to assets such as land and house. We therefore asked this question of our focus-groups.

Figure 13: Is the house you live in registered on your name?

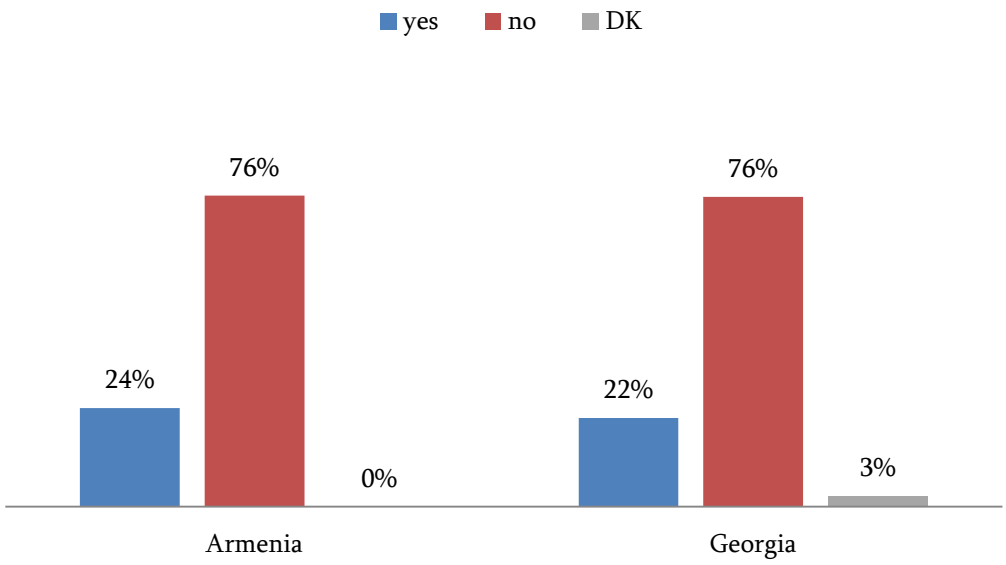
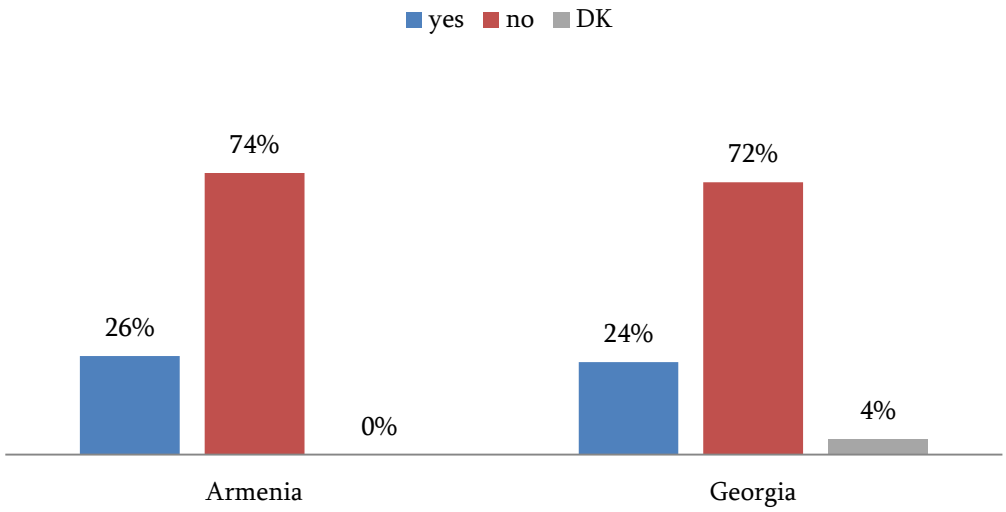


Figure 14: Is the land where you grow crops registered on your name?



In Armenia and Georgia the patterns are similar. Only about a quarter of women say that either land or a house is registered on their name. Based on focus group discussions, even that number seems high as women were using phrases like “we own” or “our land.” And the question could have been interpreted as not an individual ownership, but household ownership.

Access to information

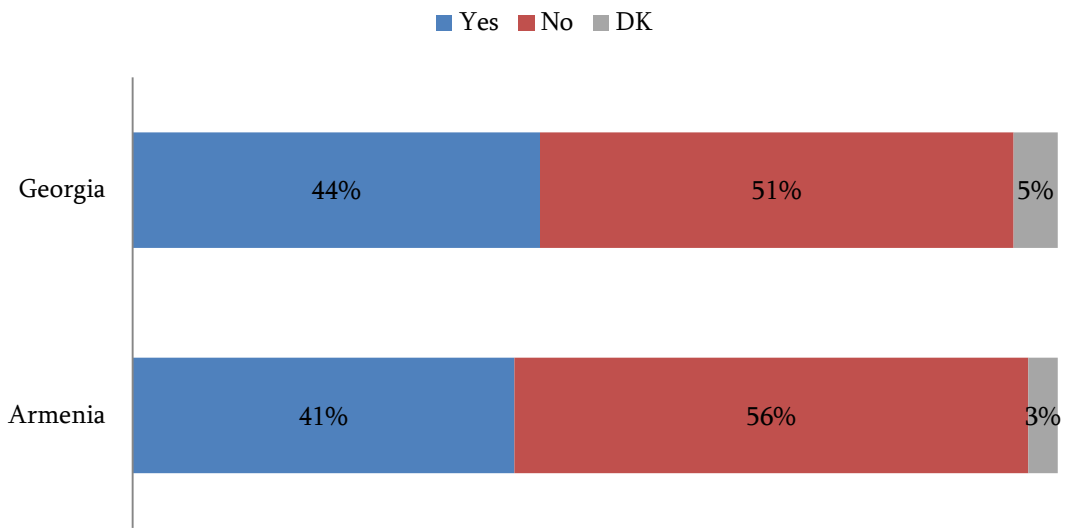
To get information about prices or agricultural inputs, local population mostly relies on neighbors. There is always somebody in a village that has recently been to a market or has travelled to the capital.

However, there seems to be a great demand for agricultural consultations. In many focus groups participants said that they could use advice for their agricultural activities. A female participant from Ninotsminda:

"We know basic, traditional agricultural rules, but it is not enough for effective farming… during the Soviet Union, we used to have specially designated laboratories which would tell us the chemical composition and fertility of our lands and seeds… then agronomists would tell us what to grow, where, hot to look after them, and what to expect… such help would be very useful."

Long-term planning and information about market demands and structures might not be obvious and easy tasks for most farmers. Thus, help in this area with agricultural consultations would be generally welcome. It is true, however, that many farmers have perception that they know exactly what should be done, and it's only a matter of lack of input or bad luck if they fail. Admitting that you can be taught in farming practices might not be pleasant. But there has been successful experience of training local farmers as trainers, so that they can go back to their villages and train their neighbors.

Figure 15: Enough information about farming practices?

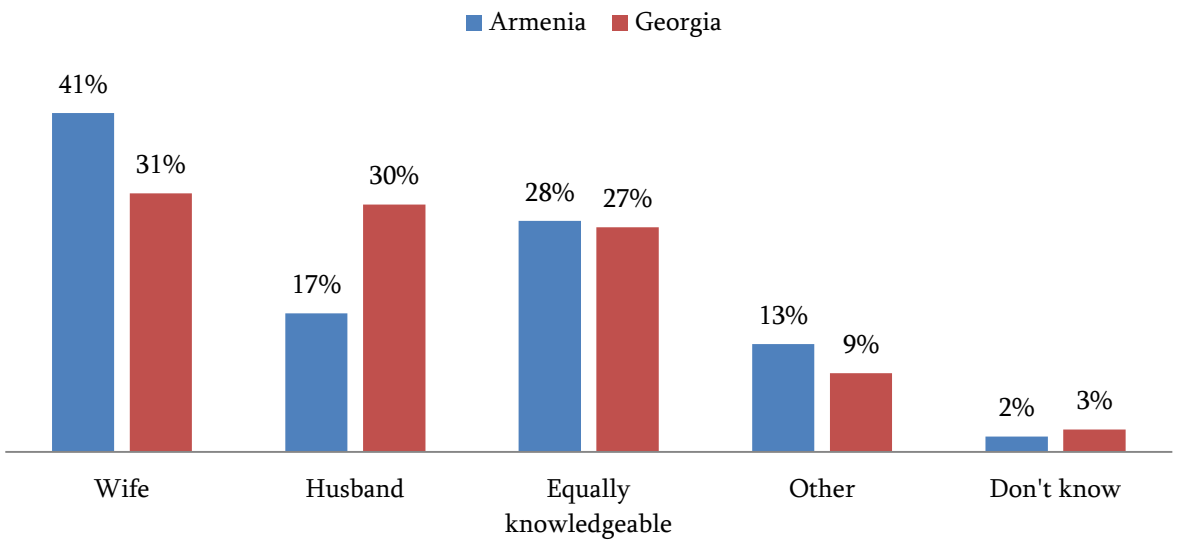


As can be seen from the graph above more than half of focus group participants in both countries said that they don't have enough information about farming practices. When agricultural planning is not properly done, then it might bring a serious damage to a local population. A male participant in Akhalkalaki gave an example of failure:

"*Last year garlic had a very high price, so everybody planted garlic hoping to make money… but since everybody did it, this year the price was very small, and all farmers lost their money."*

We asked women focus group participants, in their perception, who was the most knowledgeable about farming practices in their household.

Figure 16: Who is knowledgeable about farming practices?

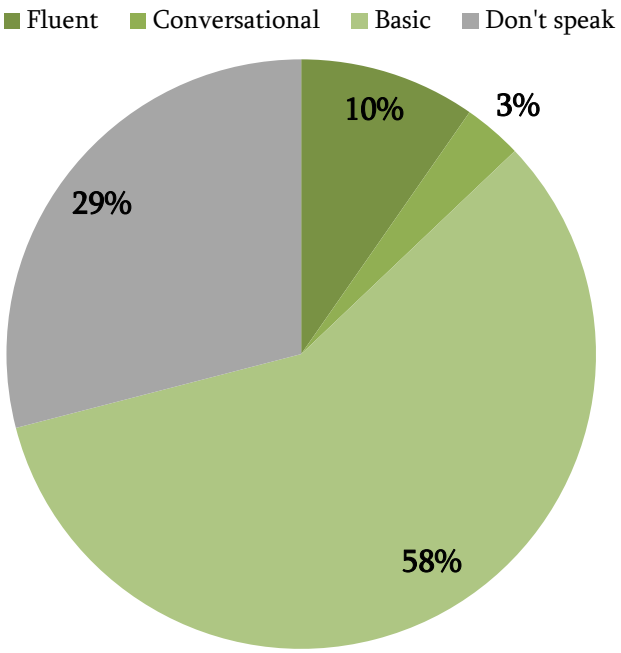


Because women are more involved in everyday agricultural activities, most of the participants claimed that they are also the ones with the most knowledge about farming practices.

Language is an important factor in gaining various types of information. In Armenia, all focus group participants were ethnic Armenians and could speak state language. In Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, however, significant proportion of population is ethnic minorities.

Of the minority groups from our focus groups, we asked them how well they know Georgian.

Figure 17: Knowledge of Georgian language by ethnic minority women in Georgia



Only 13% of ethnic minority women said that they knew fluent or conversation Georgian. 58% said they only know basics, and 29% said they can't speak Georgian at all. The situation with Russian language is better. It's also interesting that in some areas, such as the village of Khospio, ethnic Georgians can also communicate in Armenian and Russian. This will have to be kept in mind in any efforts to expand access to information.

Enhancing Access to Information

There are several areas where women empowerment could lead to greater agricultural productivity and effectiveness. First, there is a need for analytical and consultation work for which women can be trained. Second, there are particular skill-sets that farmers in villages, particularly women, would like to learn and can be easily taught.

Based on the focus group discussions that we have summarized, it is clear that farmers would really appreciate if somebody could help them to analyze their land, what seed to plant and how to look after it.

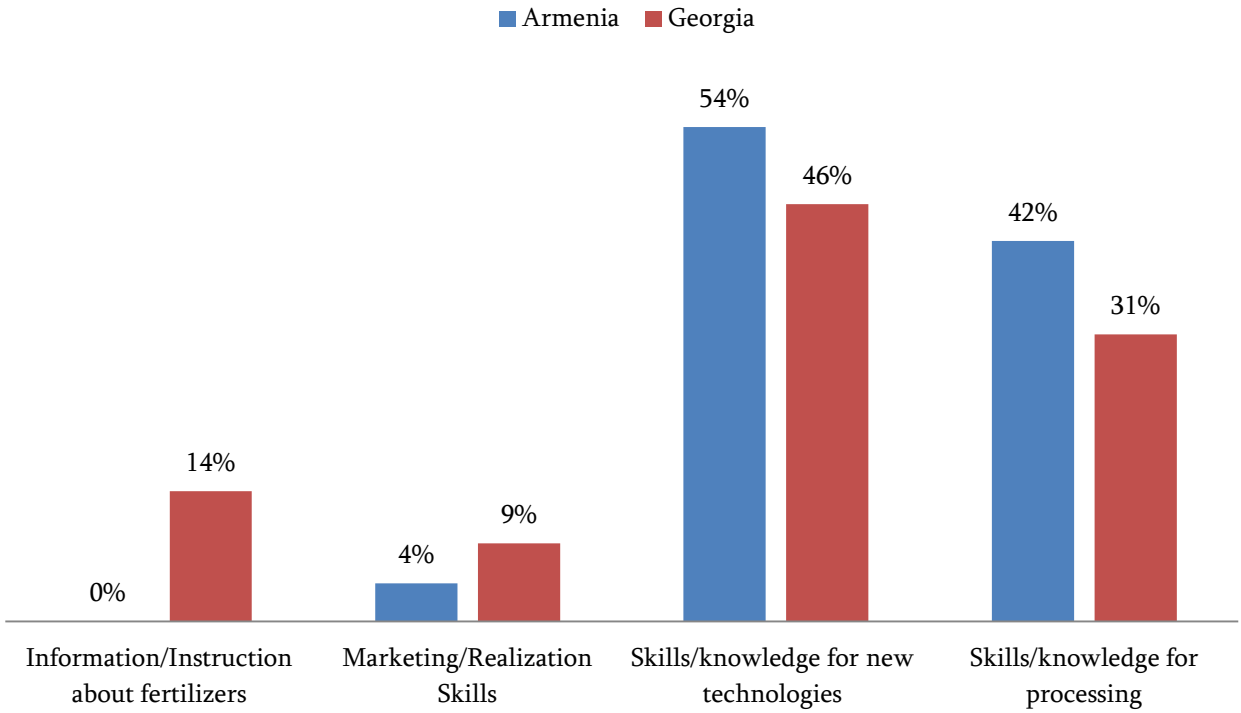
General agricultural consultations would be valued as well. As mentioned in earlier chapters, farmers are often not sure what to seed where and how to look after their crops and animals. One idea for women empowerment would be training them in agricultural issues, so that they can provide qualified agricultural consultation to local population. Interviews with different value chain representatives also demonstrated that there is a demand for such work.

In Noyemberyan, for example, where many of the participants had previously attended trainings on agricultural topics, they noted that they could benefit from more training. But they wanted trainings that are specific for them. For example, there are irrigation problems in Noyemberyan

and they could benefit from trainings on drip irrigation. Women in Shirak, on the other hand, were interested in more information in various types of crops that would grow better in the region.

We also asked focus group participants what to list particular skill sets that they would find valuable for their agricultural activities:

Figure 18: what skills needed



In both countries, focus group participants said that they would value learning new technologies and farming practices, to update their old patterns and make agriculture more efficient.

Employment

Both, Armenia and Georgia have high unemployment rates. In rural areas, formal employment is particularly problematic. Consistent with the national picture, women in rural areas tend to work in lower positions and earn less, but the single largest employer in villages is schools and they usually hire women as teachers. This changes the dynamics of financial-decision making in individual households.

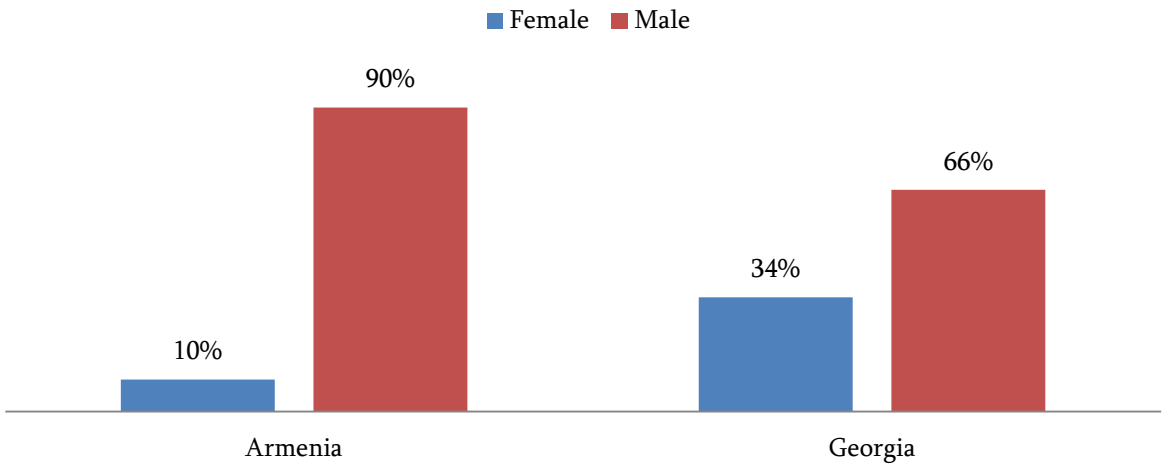
In our survey, we asked questions about employment. As monetary income is very low in villages, formal employment plays an important role for households, allowing them to take regular consumer loans with better interest rates compared to agricultural loans.

70% of focus group participants in Armenia and 62% of focus group participants in Georgia said that at least one person in their household was formally employed. 46% of participants in Armenia and 39% in Georgia were personally employed. This is higher number than we would expect if we

polled rural areas in the two countries, but our sample was not expected to be representative and probably skewed towards the employed.

In terms of earnings, as expected, the survey showed that men usually earn more. We asked all participants to identify who earns most in the household. Below is a break-down of answers.

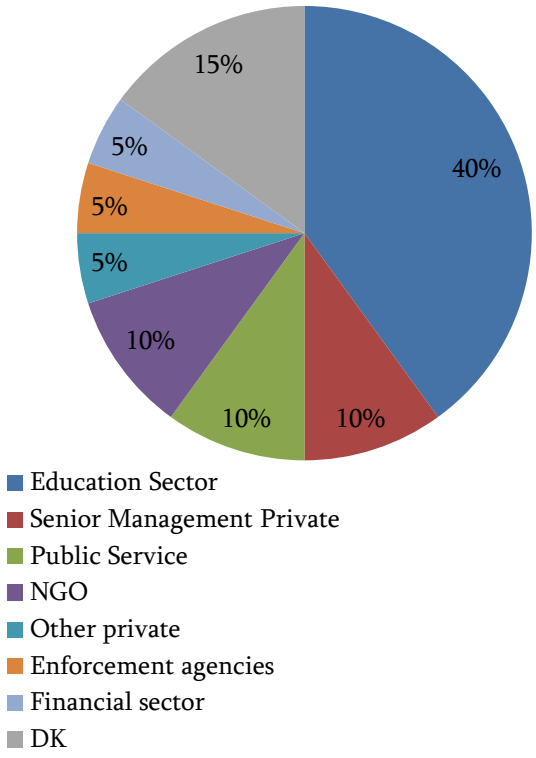
Figure 19: Who in your household makes most?



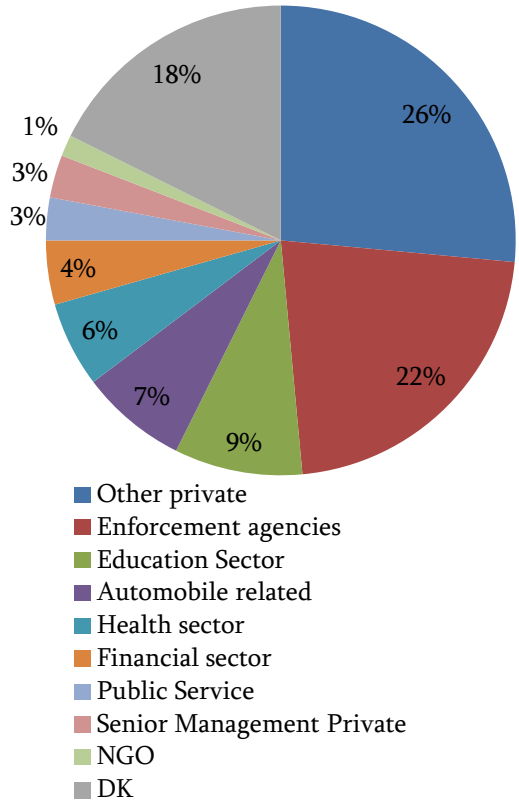
90% of focus groups participants in Armenia and 66% of focus group participants in Georgia said that "the main employed person" in their family is male. There were 20 women and 68 men in total identified as "the main employed person" in a household. We also asked about where does "the main employed person" of the household work. Below are the answers, broken down by gender:

Figure 20: Occupation of "the main employed person." (by gender).

Females



Males



As already mentioned, the main employer in villages of Armenia and Georgia is public schools. For men, most respondents said "Private" sector. During focus groups discussion, it became clear that a significant share of the men who work in private sector are doing construction-related activities, and in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, many men have left for Russia for work on construction sites. Locally, men also often work in enforcement agencies, including police or state protection service.

Political and civic participation

Political participation of women in all targeted municipalities is very limited. But there are some instances of women occupying decision-making positions. Whether they exercise real power and represent local women, however, is questionable.

"There are a couple of women deputies in Marneuli sakrebulo, but they don't do anything… it's just for statistics, not for representing our voices" (Azeri female focus group participant, Marneuli).

One of the Azeri female focus groups participants in Marneuli had a very interesting experience. She was to become a village trustee and was, in the words of other focus group participants "*practically appointed by Gamgeoba."* But Gamgebeli withdrew his decision *"in the last moment."* One of the focus group participants tried to tell the story:

"*After everything was agreed and we knew that she was going to be our village trustee, the Gamgebeli said that he couldn't do it and appointed a man from a different village… he said that men in our villages wouldn't accept a woman in charge" (*Azeri female focus group participant, Marneuli)

The woman who was supposed to become a trustee also elaborated the story:

" *I've been trying to fix water supply problem in our village for three years … people were living without water and nobody seemed to care about this … so I tried to resolve this issue myself… when I went to local trustee three years ago and said that I would solve the problem, he laughed at me and said 'I couldn't solve this problem and how can you, a woman, handle it!' … but three years passed and I finally managed, with the help of other people, to get water in the village.'*

Another participant of the focus group, which happened to be from the same village, described the emotions of villagers *"You should have seen the reactions of children when they saw water in the street … they were amazed and playing with water all day long."*

The experience of this politically active woman has two major implications. First, as expected, it is hard for a politically active woman to make this their career in rural areas. Stereotypes and existing power structures create little opportunity for them to make a political career. In our example, the woman in question was fortunate to have a relatively liberal-minded husband, who wouldn't oppose her activeness. As female participants of focus groups said, often traditional households think that "*there is something wrong with a family when a woman is so active.*"

Another major problem which is revealed by this experience is that women prefer to have other women in power addressing their issues. When a woman goes to a Gamgebeli or a village trustee, she might be embarrassed by sexist comments of a man in charge. Other women participants of the focus group raised this issue separately, *"For me, as a woman, it is easier to communicate with a woman… it would be easier to explain my problem and I would be less shy."*

Another problem is that active women don't generally get more domestic support. Most often, women have to combine their political and social activeness with already existing tasks at home. For example, a female participant of a Georgian focus group in Marneuli said:

"I was working for two different NGO projects. To keep up, I had to wake up at 6:30 in the morning, milk cows, take them to pasture … Then I would come back and make cheese, prepare and dress myself, and go to work, which would take up to about an hour by bus … in rainy days I was particularly worries as calves might have gotten in trouble … before going to sleep, I had to milk cows again at around 1 a.m."

The list of interviewees

Tamar Sabedashvili, Gender Adviser for Georgia, UN Women Eastern Europe & Central Asia

Nargiza Arjevanidze, Expert in Gender Issues, Center for Social Sciences

Nani Bendeliani, Interim Director of the Gender Equality Programme, Center for Social Sciences

Khatuna Khvichia, Project Management Specialist, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID/Georgia

David Dzebishasvhili, Program Development Specialist, Office of Democracy and Governance, USAID/Georgia

Nana Sumbadze, Director, Institute for Policy Studies

Heghine Mkrtchyan, President, Ajakits NGO, Gyumri

Tatevik Aghabekyan, Program Manager, Women's Resource Center in Yerevan

Anahit Badalyan, Founding Director of the Berd Women's Resource Center Foundation

Armenuhi Kyureghyan, Director, Vanadzor's branch of The Association of Women with University

Mikhak Fashian, Director, Agroservice "Javakheti," Akhalkalaki

Ramaz Gogoladze, Manager, Akhalkalaki Agroservice Center, Akhalkalaki

Velikhan Keropyan, Director, AgroGeo2008, Akhalkalaki

Gela Lomsadze, Large farmer, Bolnisi,

Giorgi Tsikhelashvili, Large farmer, Dmanisi

Mirian Chkhitunidze, Large farmer, Marneuli

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Annex 1: FG Discussion Guide for Women Participants

Hello, my name is _____ _____ and I represent CARE International in Caucasus, an international NGO trying to help development in this region. I would like to ask you a few questions about economic activities. The aim of this meeting is to help development of agriculture in this region with particular focus on women.

This meeting will last about 1.5 hours. Format of our meeting will be a discussion, so please feel free to express your thoughts openly, but also let others to finish their ideas. Please put your telephones on silent so that our meeting is not interrupted.

Because we want to analyze your comments and ideas thoroughly, we would like to ask you permission for audio-recording of the meeting. Comments of particular participants will not be shared or publicized; we will only use these audio-files for analysis. Your names will not appear in any document.

If you don't have any questions, then we can proceed with our questions:

- Can you please describe what do you at your family in terms of agricultural activities?
    - What agricultural products do you (your family) produce?
    - Do you process your harvest (for example, make cheese or wine, can fruits, etc.)?
    - Do you sell your agricultural products? Where? Describe the process
- In your family, how is harvesting, processing and selling divided among family members? What, in your opinion, is a strictly "man's" job and what is "women's" job?
- [TO INTERVIEWER: in case it's men who usually sell products] have you ever sold your agricultural products outside of your home? Are there particular items that men and women are responsible for selling? [TO INTERVIEWER: if no active responses provided, give examples – men selling meat and livestock, women selling vegetables and cheese]
- How do you decide in your family what crops to produce and what animals to raise?
- In agricultural activities of your household, what kind of services do you use? For example, veterinary services, fertilizers, harvest collector, etc?
    - How often do you use such inputs?
    - How do you usually pay (for example, cash in advance, take loans, share from sales of the product, barter with products)
    - Can you please describe the process of selecting who to hire such services? How information is obtained and who in your household negotiates the details?
- Where/how do you get information about farming prices, market prices, and related activities?
- Are you a member of a union or association for producers (or something similar)? Can you tell us about your experience? [TO INTERVIEWER: note and elaborate if any participant had difficulties or barriers in joining such unions or associations]
- Has your household ever taken a loan from a bank or micro-finance organization? Who obtained the loan? Have you, personally (as opposed to family), applied for a loan?

- Do you feel that you, personally, could take more economic responsibility in your family? In what ways? [TO INTERVIEWER: if no answer, then try to give ideas. For e.g. – making decision what to seed, going away to sell products, making decision how to spend income, etc. but PLEASE be sensitive about the examples and do not push too hard]
- In what ways do you think women can be empowered in general, so that they contribute more to the development of the region?

[TO INTERVIEWER: once questions are completed, and if some answers were not answered fully (particularly the ones about gender roles, inquire how men dominate different areas of economic activities and what influence do women have)

Annex 2: Short questionnaire for Focus-Group participants

We would like to ask you to take about 10-15 minutes and answer this short questionnaire. This simple questionnaire is very important for us to collect information about families in this region. It will help CARE International to design more effective projects which will foster development. In case you have questions about how to fill out this questionnaire, please don't hesitate to ask our researcher for directions.

Thank you for your time. Your input is very valuable for us.

Location	
Gender	
Age	

1. How many members live in your family?

|__|__|

2. What is your primary language of communication?

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3. How well do you speak the Georgian language?

1	Fluent
2	Conversational
3	Basic
4	Don't speak
99	Refuse to answer

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1	Basic
2	Secondary
3	Vocational/technical
4	Higher
5	Other (Please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

5. What is the main agricultural product that your household produces? [List no more than three. Most popular first]

1	
2	
3	

6. Where do you sell your agricultural products mostly?

1	Directly to local customers (neighbors)
2	Take to a market stall
3	To a wholesaler
5	Other (Please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

7. Is anybody in your family formally employed?

1	Yes	
2	No	Go to 11
99	Refuse to answer	

8. Who in your family is employed? [SELECT AS MANY AS APPLICABLE]

1	Me
2	Husband
3	Wife
4	Son
5	Daughter
6	Father
7	Mother
8	Other (Please specify):
9	Other (Please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

9. Who in your family makes the most money in formal employment?

1	Me
2	Husband
3	Wife
4	Son
5	Daughter
6	Father
7	Mother
8	Other (Please specify):
9	Other (Please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

10. Where does the main formally employed person work?

---

11. Are there particular sets of skills that you think would help you to increase your agricultural capacities

1	Yes	
2	No	Go to 13
99	Refuse to answer	

12. Please list the skills which you think would be helpful for you

13. Do you or your spouse have access to information related to new farming practices?

1	Yes
2	No
99	Refuse to answer

14. Who in your family is more knowledgeable about farming practices?

1	Me
2	My spouse
3	We are equally knowledgeable
4	Other (please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

15. Who in the household makes the principle decisions on which crops to plant and animals to raise?

1	Me
2	My spouse
3	We share the decision equally
4	Someone else in the household
99	Refuse to answer

16. Who in the household makes the principle decisions on where and for how much agricultural products should be sold?

1	Me
2	My spouse
3	We share the decision equally
4	It depends on the product sold.
5	Other (please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

17. Is the house you live in registered on your name?

1	Yes
2	No
99	Refuse to answer

18. Is the land where you grow crops registered on your name?

1	Yes
2	No
99	Refuse to answer

19. Who decides how to spend money in your household?

1	Me
2	My spouse
3	We share the decision equally
4	It depends on the product sold.
5	Other (please specify):
99	Refuse to answer

20. Can you please list the members of your household?

1	Me
2	
3	
4	
5	

Annex 3: Focus group compositions

Armenia

FG	Language	Women participants	Men participants
Amasia, women	Armenian	6	0
Amasia, mixed	Armenian	3	6
Azatan, women	Armenian	8	0
Berd, women	Armenian	10	0
Noyemberyan, women	Armenian	8	0
Noyemberyan, mixed	Armenian	4	3
Stepanavan, women	Armenian	9	0
Tashir, women	Armenian	6	0

Georgia

FG	Language	Women participants	Men participants
Ninotsminda, women	Armenian	10	0
Akhalkalaki, women	Armenian	12	0
Akhalkalaki mixed	Armenian	4	3
Akhalkalaki mixed	Georgian	4	4
Dmanisi, women	Georgian	8	0
Dmanisi, mixed	Georgian	7	4
Marneuli, women	Russian	5	0
Marneuli, women	Georgian	10	0
Gardabani, women	Russian	4	0
Gardabani, women, IDPs	Georgian	9	0