

What makes gender empowerment in agriculture:

Paid labour conditions and opportunities in Uzbekistan

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1. Introduction

The roles and gender relationships play a determining factor in the division of labor, and reflect differences within allocation of work, distribution of income, wealth, and resources in a household or community. However, although women have been performing labor-intensive tasks equal or eventually more than men's whether in agriculture, irrigation or industry, men often still predominated in the ownership and control over resources, farm and production management as well as in the household's decisions (Standing, 1999; Ahearn and Tempelman. 2010; Delgado and Zwartveen 2007; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2008; Zwartveen, 2008).

The labour out migration from rural to urban areas, which is mostly practiced by men, on one hand has become a popular livelihood strategy for cash income generation, but on the other reduced the availability of male labor which has been traditionally embedded into various agricultural activities and decision making processes connected with household, farm and water management. That situation stresses and challenges women remaining at the household/farm to play new roles and cover labor gaps either within the household/farm, out of it -working for others of the community- and sometimes in both. However, women may not receive equal wages or recognition for the work done that men do due to social norms that reproduce gender inequity. Unequal participation in labour markets has been highlighted in male and female employment- to world population ratio as maintaining as 72.2 and 47.1 per cent accordingly (ILO 2014). At the same time, difficulties of women's successfulness or efficiency in new rural farm and non-farm activities may be concluded in non-adaptions or lack of gender sensitive planning and mechanisms for inclusion of women in an equal way into paid jobs.

Current changes in roles and feminization of agriculture bring back the arguments of gender equity in development opportunities, remuneration, recognized contribution to the family and

communities, access to land and water resources and to degrees of participation and leadership (Standing 1999). These changing roles and labor positions taken by women have not been institutionalized properly within communities of Central Asian countries (Mukhamedova and Wegerich 2014; Yakubov, 2013). At the same time they indicate the complexities of identifying the diverse types of labor to which women have access and their development and empowerment possibilities based on them.

According to the latest FAO report in Central Asia, “Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have by far the highest share of agricultural GDP (around 28 percent and 27 percent respectively)” (3:2014). Within these countries, women play significant role in agriculture, livestock breeding, food security and production and marketing chains. According to ADB report "women’s economic opportunities are still greater in the informal sector, and women are more likely to earn income through small family-based businesses such as farming or handicrafts" (12:2014). Vulnerabilities of women and especially young women are greater within the dry land systems where water resources are scarce and risks due to impacts of the climate change are higher. The increase of the out migration of male members of the household from rural areas of Central Asian countries to the Russian Federation during the last 10 years may have aggravated this situation.

Labor-division in rural areas still continues to be observed due to cultural and traditional contexts as well as due to stereotypes which exists in regards to women’s access to economic opportunities, managerial and decision-making posts (ADB 2014). Therefore, proper understanding of gender allocation, change dynamics within gender roles and peculiarities on rights and access to agricultural labor assets, basic needs and security nets would contribute to obtain relevant information to inform development policies to reduce gender gaps in rural communities of dry lands systems of Central Asian countries, target groups of DS CRP in this region.

This paper explores and identifies the new allocation of labor within various types of household, farms and water management institutions as result of socio-economic processes (e.g. male migration) in rural communities of one district in Fergana province, Uzbekistan. This research will also assess the differentiated labor and development opportunities that rural women and men of different ages and socioeconomic backgrounds have in their communities or abroad, given their new roles, to measure and understand the gender gap. Likewise, this research will also identify the social norms that allow perpetuating the gender gap.

2. Conceptualizing empowerment through labor

Gender gaps in access to agricultural and other productive inputs, services, new technologies, and markets, as well as gender blind designs and planning of norms, attitudes, practices that do not consider gender differences trigger disparities such as receiving fewer benefits from labor and/or production, lack

or absence of power in decision making or recognition of contributions or as institutional actors or in other words empowerment.

Gender empowerment concept today reflects multiple experiences and views, very often customized and defined particularly in regards to women's empowerment. Kabeer (2001, 2008) defined it as gaining and expanding people's capacity for exercising strategic forms of agency, particularly in contexts where their position or abilities were denied or constrained and linkage of these individual level changes with more collective forms of agency needed to bring about sustained structural change. Vision of individual or groups being empowered through capacities of making choices and transformation of these choices into outputs and outcomes introduced by Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) built on concepts of agency and exerting agencies fruitfully have received wider and broader recognition and interpretations in World Bank reports (2012). Apart from main elements: agency and capacity, empowerment definition also enriched with the relationship between people and institutions (Narayan 2002), unpacking agency definition with access and opportunities to rights, resources, possessing decision making capacities, independency in acting (Inter-American Development Bank 2010, UN 2001). Ability to make decisions and possess and/or have access to physical and social resources needed to execute these decisions are not the only factors that could play a role in what makes agricultural empowerment. Going more in detail, various context based components such as economic power and independence are tied with employment and equal access of men and women to productive resource and opportunities.

Livelihoods are based on a number of assets, income sources, and products, as well as other resources which enable people to create stable and productive lives. Increasing control over assets potentially enables more economic opportunities and employment possibilities (Bebbington 1999). Empirical evidence suggests, that men and women own different types of assets (Quisumbing, Estudillo, and Otsuka 2004; Kristjanson et al. 2010). At the same time, literature shows that women typically have fewer overall assets than men (Antonopoulos and Floro 2005, Deere and Leon 2003). Access to and increase in control over assets (land, physical and financial) could have positive effect development outcomes and for women's empowerment (Kabeer 2010; Quisumbing 2003; World Bank 2001). Within agriculture rural communities the access and ownership of such assets as land, water, education and employment opportunities have the causes of gender disparities hindering development (Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi 2010; Klasen and Lamanna 2008).

3. Background

Employment

Agrarian reforms have been implemented in Uzbekistan since its independence in 1991 and have been leading to fundamental developments in agriculture. Agricultural sector of Uzbekistan provides about

20% (2013) of the gross domestic product and is a source of employment for about 65% of the labor force in the economy. There is a general increasing trend of the rural population in Uzbekistan

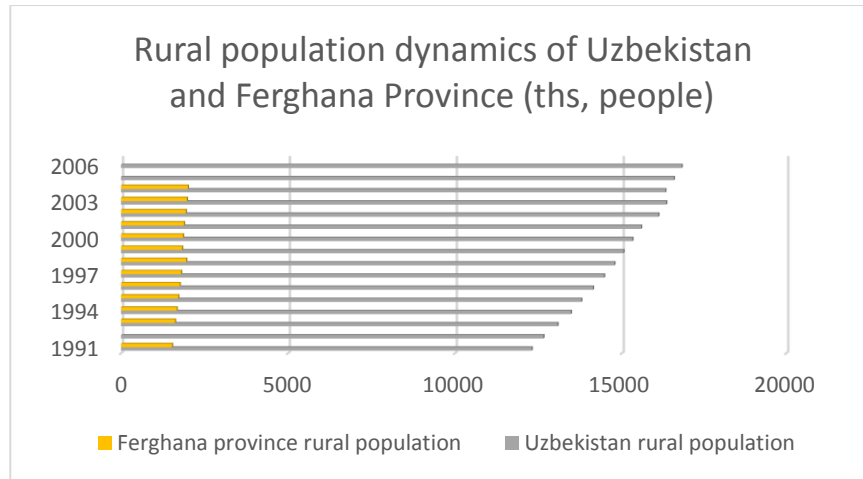


Figure 1. (Source: author’s statistical compilation form various official government statistical yearbooks)

The dynamics of employment in Uzbekistan has been showing increasing trends for numbers of labor force up to 169,4 % compared with the base year 1991, however the share of agricultural employment from the general employment in the economy has been declining (Figure 2).

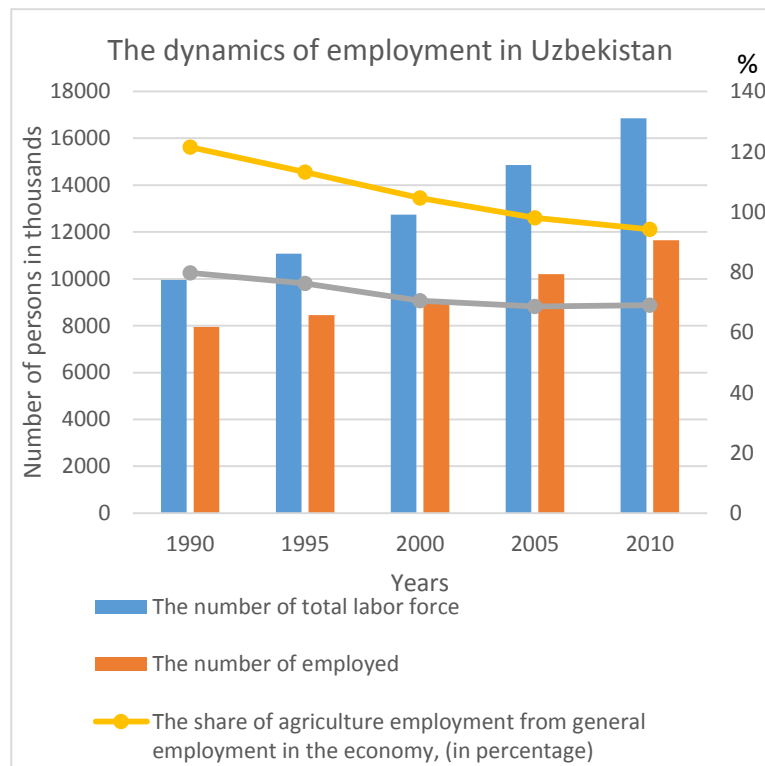


Figure 2. The dynamics of employment in Uzbekistan.

Considering the fact that majority of the population of Uzbekistan live in rural areas and rural population being closely involved within agricultural employment the numbers of rural population increase and agricultural employment decrease indicated within above figures show opposing trends.

The trend of decline in agricultural employment can be associated with several main socio-economic processes. One of them is a general decline within the agricultural sector which in 2000 has provided over 30,4% share of the GDP of the economy currently it has declined to 17,2%. Measures on optimization of the size and structure of the cultivated areas during the period of 2008-2014 have resulted in mergers of existing farms and decrease in cotton planted lands. At the same time developments of alternative business especially home gardening or of production and trade might have also influenced to shift of part of the agricultural employment to other higher income sectors. Currently wages in the agricultural sector account for around 55% of the level in the sector. Surveys (Lerman 2007) show that total family income and per capita income have been steadily growing with land holdings (for crop and livestock farmers). However not all the rural population possess land holdings which could be high in return. For this groups of population increased reliance on the sale of produce grown on the family's private plots has given additional income.

General trends of employment generalized for all sectors of economy show significant gender gaps taking into account the almost equal division of population by gender (according to the 2014 statistics female constitute 49,9% of the total population).

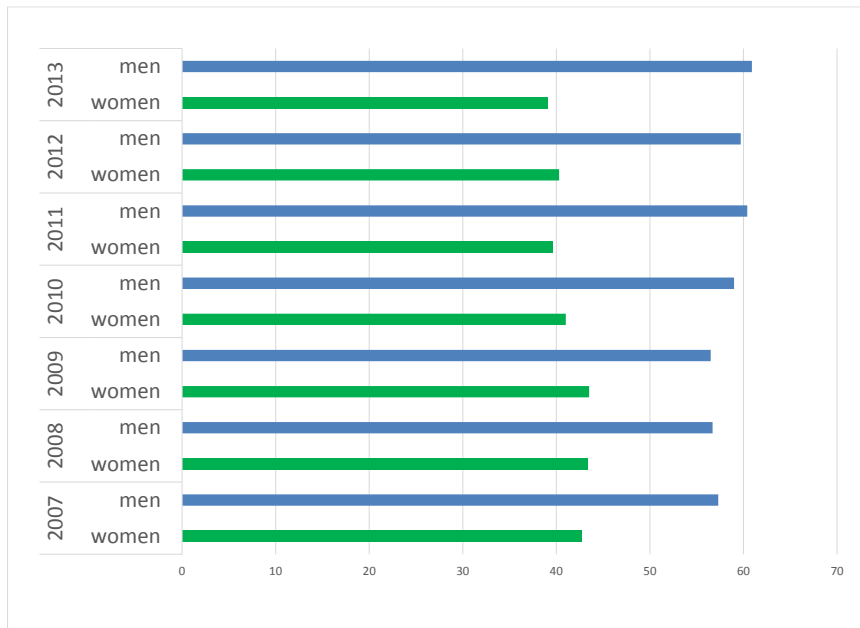


Figure 3 Number of workers and employees by gender in Republic of Uzbekistan (2007-2013) in %

Traditional women's domestic responsibilities together with women being associated with "female" embedded less well-paid sectors of the economy make them less competitive in the tight employment situation within the rural areas of the country. Being concentrated in the more in "non-productive" sectors of health, education, culture has shown a fall from the national wage averages. The role of female in agriculture is still considerable especially due to seasonal male labor migration to Kazakhstan, Russia, and Korea from the rural areas (ADB, 2005; Mansoor & Quillin, 2006). This migration trend is another reason for declining agricultural employment. The estimated numbers of labor migration indicate that over 3 million labor migrants take short-term or long term jobs in other neighboring countries. The middle age for people who are leaving in search of work makes up 25 years for male. Labor migration brings profit both for the labor migrants and their families which receive remittances.

Legislation

Women in the Republic of Uzbekistan are rendered equal rights with men based on the Constitution of Republic of Uzbekistan and enjoy a number of special provisions which protect the position of women as mothers, at home and within workforce. Special measures are also outlined within the Labor Code and Family Code which provides guarantees and rights connected with reproductive role. Labor Code (1996) of Uzbekistan with consequent updates outlines several protective privileges for employed women including: pregnant women (maternity leave) and nursing mothers, prohibiting against overtime

Ferghana province

Located in the south-east of the Central Asian region (Figure 4), the Ferghana Valley is divided between three former Soviet Socialist Republics: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (Figure 2). The Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley is divided between three provinces (Namangan, Andijan, and Ferghana). Ferghana Province – the focus of this case study – occupies 6,800 km² and consists of fifteen districts and four major cities. Ferghana Province, with about three million inhabitants, is the most populated province within the Ferghana Valley. In Uzbekistan, about 65% of the population live in rural areas and currently about 3 million people are employed in agriculture.

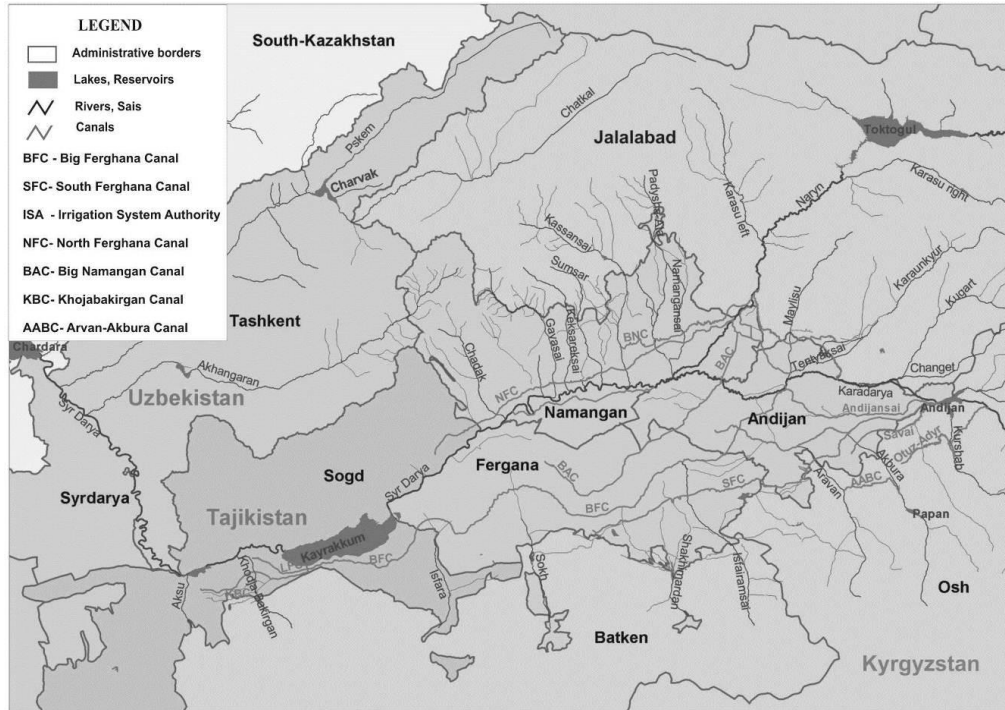


Figure 4. Map of Ferghana Valley in Central Asia

The relatively small number of women farmers does not imply that women without formal land rights do not participate actively in agriculture. In fact, women’s engagement in agriculture is even increasing (Kandiyoti, 2003). Due to the declining economic conditions in Uzbekistan and land reforms (targeted at economies of scale and continued high cotton production¹), and later the optimization of farm sizes, male labor migration to Kazakhstan, Russia, and Korea is reported to have increased rapidly, particularly from the rural areas (ADB, 2005; Mansoor & Quillin, 2006).

In Uzbekistan, although the main focus is in agriculture, kitchen gardens and extended kitchen gardens contribute to more than 80% of agricultural production (excluding crops such as cotton, wheat, rice) and ensure households’ food security in the rural and urban areas (Mukhamedova & Wegerich, 2014).

Since independence, the land area allocated to kitchen gardens has increased significantly (Scientific Information Center 2011). Since 1991 the population of the Ferghana province has increased from 2.2 to 3.3 million in 2014 (Figure 5).

¹ The land reforms in Kyrgyzstan were intended to stabilize rural livelihoods; therefore each collective farm employee received a land plot (Spoor 2004).

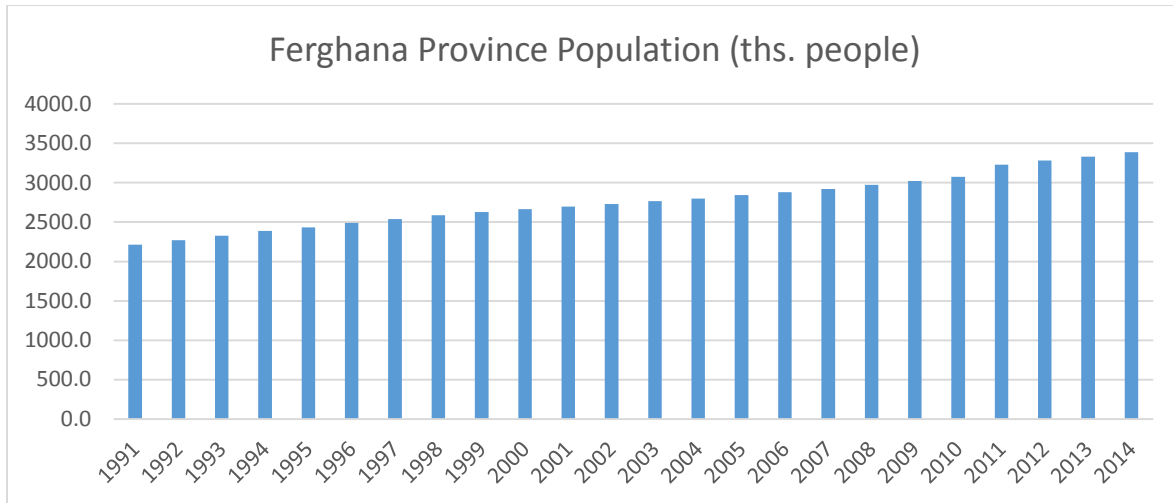
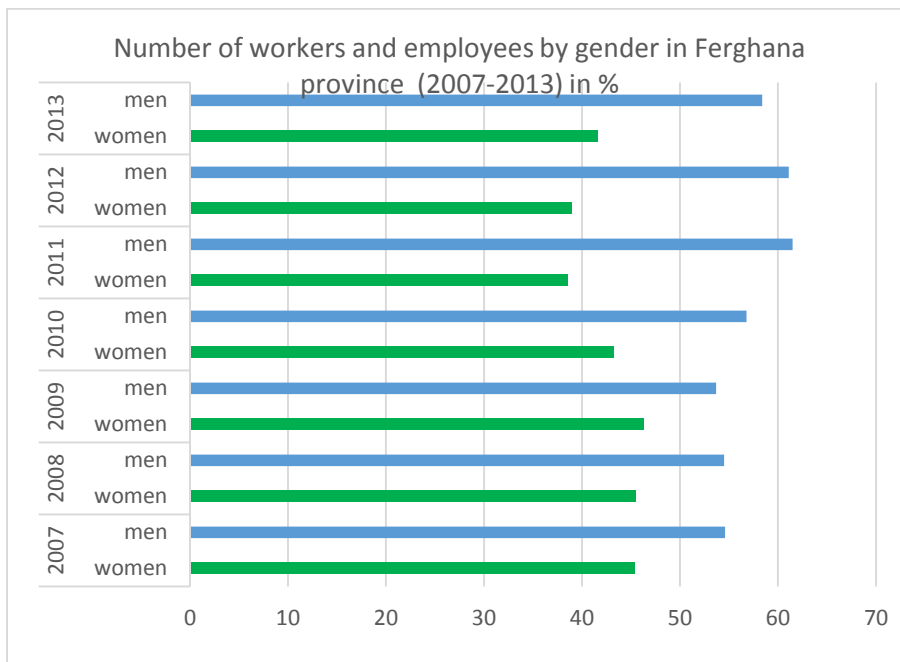


Figure 5 (Source: The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics)

Gender composition of number of workers and employees by gender in the province shows higher employment rate for men during the years.

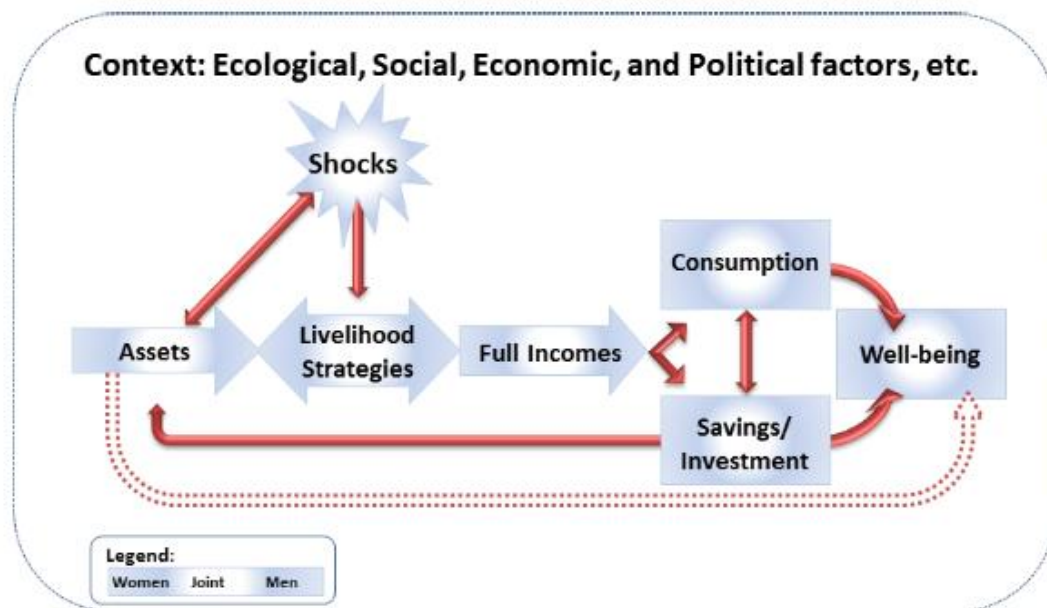


Of the 11,126 farms registered in Ferghana Province in 2010, only 516 were women-headed (Scientific Information Center, 2011, p. 112). At the same time, the real number of women involved in agriculture might be more than reported within formal statistics. Based on the previous surveys in Ferghana province rural women are involved not only in kitchen gardening, but also in field works connected with cotton growing and vegetable, fruit tree cultivation and harvesting.

4. Methodology

This is a comparative case study among rural communities of the Fergana province located in Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan. The research methods are an adapted version of the combination of two gender frameworks: Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project-GAAP- (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2011) and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index -WEIA- (Alkire et al. 2013).

Gender, Assets, and Agricultural Programs (GAAP), suggested by Meinzen-Dick et al (2011), helps to understand the gendered pathways through which asset accumulation occurs, including attention to not only men's and women's assets but also those they share in joint control and ownership. It states that different types of assets enable different livelihoods, with a greater stock and diversity of assets being associated with more diverse livelihoods and better well-being outcomes. In this framework the social, political and economic contexts also determine the access and control to resources and how people transform their resources to improve their livelihood strategies.



Source: Meinzen-Dick et al 2011, p-9.

The framework captures the gender dynamics within each element. Schematic representation of a gendered livelihood conceptual framework offered by authors, includes context which can vary with specifics of laws, norms, culture, ecological factors, social-demographic factors e.g. migration or institutions and institutional exchange. Inter-related components follow a development path which have gendered and joint control/ownership patterns. Thus the various assets through individual and household decisions and strategies are invested in productive or/and reproductive activities which might be

influenced by various shocks (price increase, health issues, political, legal or climatic changes) to receive benefits and incomes. Incomes based on the bargaining power of each individual are consumed and/or saved/invested. The ultimate element – well-being is an indicator of how gender and assets contribute to the wellbeing outcomes which not only include the material aspects, but also self-esteem, empowerment

WEIA was designed to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector. It is more focused on the agency capacity of people because it influences their decisions, their ability to negotiate and resist to manipulations and the ability to move forward constraints. Thus, WEIA assesses the degree to which women are empowered in five domains of empowerment in agriculture: decisions about agricultural production, access to and decision making power about productive resources, control of use of income, leadership in the community and time allocation.

WEIA index is a complex combination of indicators based on domains which are closely connected with the GAAP framework components namely: agricultural production, resources, income, leadership, time. In total, ten indicators with their corresponding weights are based on survey questions. With respect to each indicator the individual has to reach a certain threshold that would show the relevant achievement.

Because we will use a combination of frameworks with a special focus on labor, a tailored and local context adapted survey questionnaire is designed to answer the research questions. Survey will consist in two parts: I) questions for individuals (men and women of the same household) related to individual assets (including labor characteristics and opportunities), control and II) questions related to the household for the joint assets. Our questionnaire will capture also two moments of women lives in order to compare how their livelihoods are affected by migration: labor allocation when men are in and labor allocation when men are out². The survey (Appendix 1) plans to validated tentatively 300 household surveys (150 women and 150 men); which will be sampled based on probability proportional to population size methodology and communities relevant for CRP DS CA flagship sites. The information obtained in the surveys will be complemented with information obtained in workshops and focus groups that address questions related to the community behavior and norms.

² Survey on paid labor adapted from Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (**INRA**) in Collaboration with International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) “Questionnaire for research about agricultural roles and expectations of men and women in paid agricultural work in Saiss, Morocco”.

Case study

Conclusion

References

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Meinzen-Dick, R., N. Johnson, A. Quisumbing, J. Njuki, J. Behrman, D. Rubin, A. Peterman, and E. Waitanji. 2011. Gender, Assets, and Agricultural Development Programs: A Conceptual Framework. CAPRI

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Statistical sources: Uzbekistan in figures (1991); Economic Survey for 1991-1996 (1996); Major trends of economic and social development of Uzbekistan for years of independence (1990-2010) and forecast for 2011-2015 (2011)

Zvi Lerman, 2007. Discussion Paper No. 7.08 Agricultural Development in Uzbekistan: The Effect of Ongoing Reforms

Appendix 1 Questions for calculating WEIA index³

| Dimension | Indicator name | Survey questions | Variables ⁴ | Aggregation method ⁵ | Deprivation cut-off | Deprivation cut-off definition | Weight |
|-------------------------|--|---|------------------------|--|--|---|--------|
| Agricultural Production | <i>Input in productive decision</i> | How much input did you have in making decisions about food crop farming (kitchen garden), cash crop farming, livestock raising or fish culture. Can you and to what extent make your own personal decisions if you wanted to in regards to: agricultural production, which inputs to buy, types of crops to grow, how should take crops to market, livestock raising? | B02 1-3,6 G02 A-E | Achievement in two | Inadequate if individual participates but does not/has not at least some input in decisions or does not make decisions nor feels he or she could | B01==1 & B02==1, ((G01!=1 & A05==1) & (G01!=2 & A05==2)) & G02==1 | 0.10 |
| | <i>Relative autonomy in productive decisions</i> | My actions in [domain] are partly because I will get in trouble with someone if I act differently. Regarding [domain] I do what I do so others don't think poorly of me. Regarding [domain] I do what I do because I personally think it is the right thing to do. Agricultural production, inputs to buy, crops to grow, take to market, livestock. | G03-G05 A-E | Achievement any | Inadequate if Relative Autonomy Indicator is less than 1 | | 0.10 |
| Resources | <i>Ownership of land and assets</i> | Who would you say can use the [item] most of the time? Agricultural land, large livestock, small livestock, chickens and so on; fishpond/equipment; farm equipment (nonmechanized); farm equipment | C03 A-N | Achievement in any if not only one small asset | Inadequate if household does not own any asset or if household owns the type of asset but she or he does not own | C01a==1 & (C02!=1, 3, 5, 7, 9) | 0.07 |

³ Source: Meinzen-Dick et al 2011, p. 61-62..

⁴ Module codes: A (assets) B (decisionmaking), C (productive capital), E (leadership), F (time allocation), G (autonomy in decision making),

⁵ Aggregation will be done based on structured answers numbered based on yes/no and scaled answers.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--|----------------------|---|--|---|------|
| | | (mechanized); nonfarm business equipment, house; large durables; small durables; cell phone; nonagricultural land (any); transport. | | (chickens, nonmechanized equipment and no small consumer durables) | most of it alone | | |
| | <i>Decisions regarding the purchase, sale or transfer of land and assets</i> | Who would you say can decide whether to sell, give away, rent/mortgage [item] most of the time? Who contributes most to decisions regarding a new purchase of [item]? Agricultural land, large livestock, small livestock, chickens and so on, fishpond, farm equipment (nonmechanized), farm equipment (mechanized). | C04-C06 A-G, C09 A-G | Achievement in any if not only chickens and nonmechanized farming equipment | Inadequate if ousehold does not own any asset or household owns the type of asset but he or she does not participate in decisions (exchange or buy) about it | C01a==1 & (C04!=1,3,5,7,9) & (C05!=1,3,5,7,9) & (C06!=1,3,5,7,9) & (C09!=1,3,5,7,9) | 0.07 |
| | <i>Access to and decisions about credit</i> | Who made the decision to borrow/what to do with money/item borrowed from [source]? Nongovernmental organization, informal lender, formal lender (bank), friends or relatives, rotating savings and credit associations (savings/credit group). | C11-C12 A-E | Achievement in any | Inadequate if household has no credit or used a source of credit but she or he did not participate in any decisions about it | C10<=3 & (C11!=1,3,5,7,9) & (C12!=1,3,5,7,9) | 0.07 |
| Income | <i>Control ever use of income</i> | How much input did you have in decisions about the use of income generated from food crop, cash crop, livestock, nonfarm activities, wages and salary, and fish culture? To what extent do you feel you can make your own personal decisions regarding these aspects of household life if you want(ed) to: your own wage or salary employment? Minor household expenditures? | B03 1-6, G02 G-H | Achievement in any if not only minor household expenditures | Inadequate if individual participates in activity but has no input or little input in decisions about income generated | B01==1 & B03==1, ((G01!=1 & A05==1) & (G01!=2 & A05==2)) & G02==1 | 0.20 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--|---------|--------------------|---|--------|------|
| Leadership | <i>Group membership</i> | Are you a member of any agricultural/livestock/fisheries producer/market group; water, forest users', credit, or microfinance group; mutual help or insurance group (including burial societies); trade and business association; civic/charitable group; local government; religious group; other women's group; other group? | E07 A-K | Achievement in any | Inadequate if not part of at least one group | E07==2 | 0.10 |
| | <i>Speaking public</i> | Do you feel comfortable speaking up in public to help decide on infrastructure (like small wells, roads) to be built, to ensure proper payment of wages for public work or other similar programs, to protest the misbehavior of authorities or elected officials, or to intervene in a family dispute? | E02 A-C | Achievement in any | Inadequate if not comfortable speaking in public | | 0.10 |
| Time | <i>Workload</i> | Worked more than 10.5 hours in the previous 24 hours. | F01 | | Inadequate if individual works more than 11 hours per day | | 0.10 |
| | <i>Leisure time</i> | How would you rate your satisfaction with your time available for leisure activities such as visiting neighbors, watching TV, listening to the radio, seeing movies, or doing sports? | F04B | | Inadequate if not satisfied (<5) | F01B<5 | 0.10 |

Appendix 2

General and specific questions on labor