Poverty, Environment, & Gender

A Teacher's Handbook

BY FRANK G. KARIORIS & ELENA KIM
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&
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About the Center for Critical Gender Studies
The Center for Critical Gender Studies at the American University of Central Asia seeks to provide an innovative forum and network for research on issues related to gender and sexuality, at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), in Bishkek, and beyond. The Center is a research hub located at AUCA and is connected with scholars both within Bishkek and globally. We are a resource for AUCA and its students, as well as engaging those outside the bounds of the university.

The Center anchors faculty research projects, conferences, and workshops; and hosts visiting scholars and puts on an Annual Lecture series. The Center offers an Undergraduate Minor in Gender Studies, a Concentration for Liberal Arts & Sciences Majors, and a Concentration for Sociology MA students. The Center offers the first academic program in Gender Studies in Central Asia. These programs offer an Interdisciplinary set of classes related to topics of gender and sexuality that engage issues theoretically as well as empirically.

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About UNDP-UNEP PEI

Poor people depend on the environment for their livelihoods and well-being. Improved management of the environment and natural resources contributes directly to poverty reduction, more sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor growth. To fight poverty, promote security and preserve the ecosystems that poor people rely on for their livelihoods, we must place pro-poor economic growth and environmental sustainability at the heart of our economic policies, planning systems and institutions.

To tackle this challenge, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment joined hands and launched the Poverty-Environment Initiative. The Poverty-Environment Initiative is a global UN programme that helps countries to integrate poverty-environment linkages into national and sub-national development planning, from policymaking to budgeting, implementation and monitoring.

With both financial and technical support, UNDP and UN Environment assist government decision-makers and a wide range of other stakeholders to manage the environment in a way that improves livelihoods and leads to sustainable growth. The Initiative works with key government partners to raise awareness, influence policy making and strengthen the mainstreaming of poverty-environment into budget processes, sector programmes and sub-national planning. The overall aim is to bring about lasting institutional change and to catalyse key actors to increase investment in pro-poor environmental and natural resource management.
# Table of Contents

About the Center for Critical Gender Studies ................................................................. 4  
About the Authors ............................................................................................................. 4  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... 4  
About UNDP-UNEP PEI ................................................................................................. 5  
About this handbook ....................................................................................................... 8  
Glossary ............................................................................................................................ 10  
Abbreviations .................................................................................................................. 17  

Chapter 1. Introduction: Gender and Poverty ................................................................. 19  
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 20  
  Learning Outcomes ....................................................................................................... 21  
  Conceptions of Gender ................................................................................................. 21  
  Gender and poverty ....................................................................................................... 22  
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan ...................................................................................... 24  
  Lesson Plan .................................................................................................................... 29  
  Readings ........................................................................................................................ 30  

Chapter 2. Linkages Between Poverty, Environment, and Gender in Development Practices .31  
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 32  
  Making Links .................................................................................................................. 33  
  Linkages and Natural Resources .................................................................................. 35  
  UN Framework Convention on Climate Change .......................................................... 38  
  Vignettes from PEI Kyrgyzstan ...................................................................................... 41  
  Lesson Plan .................................................................................................................... 45  
  Readings ........................................................................................................................ 47  

Chapter 3. Methodologies: Participatory Research & Beyond .................................... 48  
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 49  
  Feminist Research Methodology .................................................................................. 49  
  Participatory Research Methods ................................................................................... 50  
  Methods & Methodologies ............................................................................................ 51  
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan ...................................................................................... 52  
  Lesson Plan .................................................................................................................... 78  
  Readings ........................................................................................................................ 80
Chapter 4. Mainstreaming Gender, Poverty, and the Environment ........................................81
  Introduction .................................................................................................................82
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan .....................................................................................85
  Lesson Plan ..................................................................................................................86
  Readings .......................................................................................................................87

Chapter 5. From WID to GAD ......................................................................................88
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................89
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan .....................................................................................91
  Lesson Plan ..................................................................................................................114
  Readings .......................................................................................................................116

Chapter 6. Eco-Feminisms ..........................................................................................117
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................118
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan .....................................................................................121
  Lesson Plan ..................................................................................................................122
  Readings .......................................................................................................................123

Chapter 7. Environment in Development ......................................................................124
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................125
  Sustainable development .........................................................................................125
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan .....................................................................................128
  Lesson Plan ..................................................................................................................132
  Readings .......................................................................................................................133

Chapter 8. Addressing Poverty Across Cultures..........................................................134
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................135
  Measures of Poverty ..................................................................................................136
  Poverty Across Cultures ............................................................................................137
  Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan .....................................................................................138
  Lesson Plan ..................................................................................................................139
  Readings .......................................................................................................................141

Bibliography ..................................................................................................................142

Appendix 1: Further Readings ......................................................................................148
About this handbook

This Teaching Handbook on “Environment, Poverty and Gender” is designed to be a practical guide for faculty to deliver this graduate level course in an interdisciplinary, evidence-based and interactive manner. The handbook will utilize as its primary case UNDP-UNEP PEI’s vast and important work in Kyrgyzstan, supplementing this with various other cases and readings. In such a way, the handbook will be applicable in many institutions around the globe and act as a further tool for development and education.

This handbook consists of eight chapters, each covering an important aspect central to understanding the intricacies and complexities of the linkages between the gender, poverty and environment. Each substantive chapter will relate to one week’s worth of work for a course. The content of each chapter will include:

▶ Short Introduction to the week’s topic and to the reading

▶ A vignette taken from PEI Kyrgyzstan, providing necessary and important voice to individuals impacted by these matters

▶ A reading and or a case study document. These readings and documents will be, depending on copyright, either listed with the necessary information to find the reading, or directly inserted into the handbook. There will be some case study document in every chapter.

▶ Lessons and exercises. Each chapter will contain an in-class exercise to synthesize, analyze, and address the reading and case study presented that week. These lessons will be laid out in such a form that a faculty member could take them into class and run the activity.

The handbook is designed so that upon completion of the course students will have attained the following learning outcomes:

▶ Understand the importance of “gender” as a variable for promoting sustainable development and environment
Understand gender roles in environmental management and use

Critically analyze and critique examine why it is important to incorporate gender considerations into the design and implementation of environmental policy.

Be able to demonstrate new skills in research, analysis, policy action, leadership, and public engagement.

Understand the importance of Poverty-Environment-Gender interlinkages in today’s development programs

This Handbook is aimed at being an active, open, and fluid tool for classrooms around the world. As such, some elements of the Handbook will need to be adjusted to the particularities of the classroom setting. The Handbook stems from teaching at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA). Class sessions there are 75 minutes long, and, with Masters classes, these are sometime blocked together with two 75 minutes blocks in a room, separated by a 15 minute break. As such, the lesson plans are set up in this fashion. That said, the lesson plans are easily adaptable to either longer or shorter class periods depending on the needs of students or the institutional specifics.

Similarly, the readings provided are meant to provide substantive texts for students to work with and through to understand these topics. That said, each class is different and the faculty member should adjust the readings as necessary for their students and their own interests. This can be done by making some of the ‘required’ readings in the Handbook ‘recommended’ readings instead; or through using excerpts from the texts.
Glossary

**Biological diversity:** Variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

**Capacity building:** A process of developing and strengthening the skills, processes and resources among organizations and communities.

**Climate change:** A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

**Domestic work:** Tasks performed inside a household in order to ensure that the basic needs of its members are met, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children or older adults and other dependent family members. Traditionally, a person is not paid for performing these tasks, and power or status is not necessarily accorded because of these responsibilities. In many societies, the person responsible for the household is in a subordinate position within it, and, most often, women and girls are responsible for all household tasks, even if they work outside the home.

**Double standard:** men’s power to define the content of formal and informal behavioral cultures, which means that the criteria or standards used to evaluate and regulate women often differ from those for men, benefiting the latter.
**Empowerment:** Process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

**Emancipation of women:** Women’s liberation from the authority and control of men and traditional power structures, as well as to secure equal rights for women, remove gender discrimination from laws, institutions and behavioral patterns, and set legal standards that shall promote their full equality with men.

**Equal access to resources for women and men:** Equal access to resources implies that women are able to have equal access to, use of and benefit from all specific resources (material, financial, human, social, political, etc.).

**Equal opportunities for women and men:** The absence of barriers to economic, political and social participation on grounds of sex and gender. Such barriers are often indirect, difficult to discern and caused and maintained by structural phenomena and social representations that have proved particularly resistant to change. Equal opportunities as one of a set of gender equality objectives is founded on the rationale that a whole range of strategies, actions and measures are necessary to redress deep-rooted and persistent inequalities.

**Feminism:** A theory and social movement that focuses on women’s rights and seeks to redress inequalities.
**Feminization of poverty:** The increasing incidence and prevalence of poverty among women compared to men, as a result of structural discrimination that affects women's lives and is reflected in lower salaries, lower pensions, fewer benefits, etc.

**Food security:** A condition related to the supply of food, and individuals' access to it.

**Gender:** A contested term which typically refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable (UN, 2000).

**Gender analysis:** Critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect women, men, girls and boys in a given policy area, situation or context. Gender analysis examines the relationships between women and men and the constraints they face relative to each other in achieving gender equality in a given policy area, situation or context.

**Gender awareness:** Implies the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not apparent on the surface.

**Gender blindness:** The failure to recognize the differences between males and females and therefore leading to failure to provide for the differences.

**Gender discrimination:** Denying opportunities and rights or giving preferential treatment to individuals on the basis of their sex.
**Gender division of labor:** Allocation of different jobs or types of work to women and men. Institutional rules, norms and practices that govern the allocation of tasks between women and men and girls and boys also constitute the gender division of labour, which is seen as variable over time and space and constantly under negotiation.

**Gender equality:** The elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender so that girls and women, boys and men have equal opportunities and benefits.

**Gender equity:** Giving equal treatment to both girls and boys, women and men to access resources and opportunities. In the provision of education, it refers to ensuring that girls and boys have equal access to enrolment and other educational opportunities.

**Gender gap:** The gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender neutral:** The claim some people make when they want to present themselves as not practicing gender-based discrimination. What it often masks, however, is the failure to take gender issues into consideration, and this can translate into discrimination against girls as it fails to pay attention to the distinct and special needs of girls and boys.
**Gender relations:** Relationships between women and men acquired through the process of socialization in terms of power sharing, decision making, and division of labour within the household and in the society at large.

**Gender responsiveness:** Refers to taking action to correct gender bias and discrimination so as to ensure gender equality and equity.

**Gender-sensitive:** Policies and programmes are gender-sensitive if they take into account the particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men, while aiming to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality, including an equal distribution of resources, therefore addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.

**Gender stereotypes:** The constant portrayal, such as in the media, conversation, jokes or books, of women and men occupying social roles according to a traditional gender role or division of labour.

**Hegemonic masculinity:** A cultural norm that continuously connects men to power and economic achievements. This pattern of masculinity, which shapes the hegemonic position, is not only adverse to equality and inclusion, but also brings disadvantages and costs for men.

**Informal economy:** Unpaid economic activities performed for the direct benefit of the household or for the households of relatives or friends on a reciprocal basis, including everyday domestic work and a great variety of self-provisioning activities and/or professional activity, whether as a sole or secondary occupation, exercised gainfully and not occasionally, on the limits of, or outside, statutory, regulatory or contractual obligations, but excluding informal activities that are also part of the criminal economy.
**Patriarchy**: An ideology and social system that propagates male supremacy or male power and superiority over women as natural and God given. The operating premise is that men are biologically, intellectually and emotionally superior to women. Conversely, women are considered to be weak and dependent on men for protection, guidance, upkeep and general survival. The ideology is institutionalized through active formal and informal systems, backed up by ideas, beliefs, practices and culture – and sometimes force. A patriarchal ideology is the key factor in the structural gender inequality in most of our societies (Mlama et al 2005).

**Practical gender needs**: The needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. They are a response to immediate and perceived necessity, identified within a specific context.

**Power relations** The ways in which gender shapes the distributions of power at all levels of society. One of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power is that of inequalities between women and men. The set of roles, behaviors and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women and men (‘gender’) can be the cause, consequence and mechanism of power relations, from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making. Wider structures and institutions can also shape the distribution of power by reinforcing and relying on gender roles.

**Reproductive work**: Reproductive work involves all the tasks associated with supporting and servicing the current and future workforce – those who undertake or will undertake productive work. It includes childbearing and nurture, but is not limited to these tasks. It has increasingly been referred to as ‘social reproduction’ to indicate that the term has a broader scope than simply the activities associated with biological reproduction. The fact that reproductive work is the essential basis of productive work is the principal argument for the economic importance of reproductive work. Most of it is undertaken primarily by women, and is unpaid and therefore unrecorded in national accounts.

**Social construction**: A process through which a given community assigns, institutionalizes and legitimizes gender roles.
Triple burden: Women’s triple role refers to a reproductive, productive and community managing role. The way these forms are valued affects the way women and men set priorities in planning programmes or projects. The taking or not taking into consideration of these forms can enhance or limit women’s chances of taking advantage of development opportunities. This concept builds off the previous concept of ‘Double Burden’

Qualitative research methods: Primarily an exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The sample size is typically small, and respondents are selected to fulfil a given quota.

Quantitative research methods: Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.

Strategic gender needs: The needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. Meeting strategic needs assists women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women’s subordinate position.

Sustainable development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Abbreviations

List of some key abbreviations discussed both within the handbook and within the literature more broadly.

ADB  Asian Development Bank
AUCA  American University of Central Asia
BPfA  Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBA  Community-based Adaptation
CCGS  Center for Critical Gender Studies
CIS  Commonwealth of Independent States
CEDAW  Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GAD  Gender and Development
EDB  Eurasian Development Bank
EGI  Environment and Gender Index
EIA  Environmental Impact Assessment
ESD  Education for Sustainable Development
EU  European Union
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP  Gross-Domestic Product
GHG  Greenhouse gas
GEP  Gender – Environment – Poverty Index
GIZ  Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IMF  International Monetary Fund
MDG  Millennium Development Goals
NAP  National Plan of Action for Achievement of Gender Equality
NAPA  National Adaptation Programmes of Action
OECD  Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>Poverty-Environment Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEER</td>
<td>Public Environmental Expenditure Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>REDD</td>
<td>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>UNCCD</td>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>WAD</td>
<td>Women and Development</td>
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<td>WED</td>
<td>Women, Environment and Development</td>
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<td>WID</td>
<td>Women in Development</td>
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<td>WUA</td>
<td>Water User Association</td>
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Chapter 1. Introduction: Gender and Poverty
Introduction

In 2017, the world’s 8 richest men (indeed, specifically men) had the same wealth as the poorest 50% of the world’s population (3.5 billion people) (Elliot 2017). This figure is both alarming, as well as exceptionally telling. The percentage of wealth concentrated in the upper echelons of the world’s super elite has been rising for the past decade. This concentration of wealth is, as hinted at above, directly and dramatically linked to issues of gender. It is not by happenstance that the eight richest people in the world are all men. This is, in fact, a direct result of a variety of systems and processes by which women are, on the whole, provided with less options and opportunities. Of the top 50 wealthiest people, according to Forbes, only 6 of them are women; and only 3 more are between 50 to 100th wealthiest (Forbes 2017). For a reference point that many know when discussing rich women, Oprah Winfrey is number 660 on the list.

While wealth is unevenly distributed at the top end of the wealth divide, similar situations often occur at the other end of the spectrum, where women are paid less for similar work and struggle to be given appropriate compensation and rights over their labor and with regard to land. It is these concerns which this Handbook and its readings and cases spends time exploring, as these are the issues that dramatically impact on the daily lives of men and women around the world. All of this, though, is part of a broader system of neoliberal capitalism that marginalizes the humanity of individuals, suppressing this both in the system itself as well as internal to the individual, and prioritizes profit over and above humanity.

In prioritizing profit over people, neoliberalism has also undertaken the striping and strangling of the planet itself. The planet is not a place to live in/on, but is simply a space to pull resources from. In its extractive techniques, capitalism has endangered and destroyed countless environments and species. Through this we have seen extensive extinction of species, as well as an increase in the unlivable spaces around the globe. Not only that, but these natural resources – minerals and fuels – are beginning to be depleted.

This process is not evenly distributed, but is a burden carried by the formerly colonized nations (the Global South; Developing Counties) of the world in large part; most especially Africa which has been stripped of natural resources, with profits leaving the country to head back to the Western country running the companies. This process is similarly underway within Kyrgyzstan – from where this Handbook originates. It is here at this intersection where poverty and the environment come into
clearest focus. But it is merely the most visual representation. Some reports state that upwards of 40% of food is being thrown in the garbage in Europe and the US. This dumpstering of food is a silent and nearly invisible form of environmental concern that is directly linked to poverty.

This handbook seeks to shed light on some of the interconnections outlined briefly above. Written in accessible language, the Handbook hopes that faculty and students around the globe will be able to take this Handbook into their classrooms and teach and take a full course. Rather than being a standard format textbook, the Handbook is configured in such a way as to allow individual instructors to mold the course as necessary; but, more importantly, it provides vignettes and case studies from the UNDP-PEI in Kyrgyzstan. Beyond giving further data for discussion, this ensures that the topic is not decontextualized, and remains bodied, with individuals present throughout.

Learning Outcomes

As outlined in the Preface to the Handbook, it is important to begin working through the critical topics of gender, poverty, and environment as they represent some of the largest challenges and issues as we move further forward into the 21st Century. Any understanding of the current world requires a minimum understanding of these matters. This chapter will begin the conversation through exploring and laying out some of the fundamentals surrounding gender, then tying that together with poverty.

The Learning objectives for this chapter and this week’s lesson are as follows. By the end of this chapter, the students should:

1. Understand the meaning of gender
2. Understand the social construction of gender
3. Understand how gender and poverty are linked

These learning outcomes are fundamental for the overarching goals of the course. Further to this, these objectives link the fundamental concerns of the course – poverty, environment, and gender – with critical conceptions related to gender.

Conceptions of Gender

The concept of ‘gender’ has been widely used in reference to socially determined roles and relations between women and men. Conventionally, the term ‘gender’ is about socio cultural classification of
women and men. Such classification is based on societal norms and values that define the roles men and women should play in a society. Gender roles are determined by a society which assigns different responsibilities to men and women. These roles, therefore, are malleable and vary over time and from one place to another. A clear understanding of gender, and the ability to apply it, requires knowledge of the concept’s underlying concepts. The Glossary above provides a number of concepts related to gender issues.

Each of the concepts regarding gender from the Glossary is defined in minimal terms, and simplifies them in a variety of fashions. As such, these should be treated as tentative and beginning definitions rather than final or full. These concepts will reappear throughout the Handbook, enlisted as tools to understand the complicated and complex lived realities of individuals. In class discussions, think through these terms. How does the class understand them? How are they able – or not – to be applied to the context in which they class is occurring?

Gender and poverty

In the UN General Assembly resolution adopting the 2030 Agenda on 25 September 2015, SDG 1 reads: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, with target 1.1 stating: “By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than US$ 1.25 a day.” In 1990, three World Bank economists noted that six countries amongst the poorest were all within a poverty line of one US dollar per person. This similarity served as the basis of the original “US$ 1.00 a day” global poverty line, without any in-depth international research on the relevance and meaning of it (Godinot 2017). This decision was simple and convenient and attracted considerable interest and criticism because it reinforced a rather technocratic and one-dimensional approach to poverty (Godinot 2017). A multidimensional approach to poverty is being put forward which would involve multiple stakeholders. The International poverty line of US$ 1.25 a day, however, has not given any of the people living in extreme poverty to define extreme poverty in their own words. This is seen as a serious problem because “defining poverty without even dialoguing with people who live in it would be comparable to writing about gender problems without ever talking to women” (Godinot 2017). Further information can be found in Xavier Godinot (2017) ‘Measuring Extreme Poverty: Who decides What?’. 
It is now recognized that poverty affects men, women, boys, and girls, people of different age, ethnicity, family status, and sex. But the actual experience of poverty is different by these groups of people. Due to women’s social and gender roles - socially constructed subordination - women face a number of disadvantageous conditions which accumulate and intensify the already numerous effects of poverty (Social Watch Research Team 2010). To better understand how this happens one must understand how gender is a social construct which is manifested at various levels and reinforced by various structures. These structures include:

- **Household**: Girls and boys are assigned different roles, rights and benefits. This begins when they are small, and persists through issues of succession and inheritance.
- **Community**: Socially constructed roles are reinforced through differential allocation of roles, rights and privileges. Women and girls cook and serve at community meetings, while men deliberate on issues and make decisions.
- **School**: Teachers treat girls and boys differently, by reinforcing stereotyped gender roles and using texts, curricula and management styles that reinforce gender stereotypes.
- **Religion**: Religion is used to reinforce gender inequalities in society by positioning women in a subordinate status to men. Text in the Christian Bible, for example, saying that wives should submit to their husbands is often used to dominate or even abuse women.
- **Government**: Gender insensitive policies and plans, as well as the absence of women in decision making processes and positions, reinforce gender stereotyped roles, rights and privileges.
- **Media**: The media play a big role in portraying stereotypical images of women and men that reinforce gender inequalities.

All these forces position women in a lower social status compared with men – socially, economically, politically and culturally (Mlama et al 2005).

Evelyn Dormekpo’s (2015) article called “Poverty and Gender Inequality in Developing Countries” argues that while poverty and gender inequality are massive problems which researchers and policy makers have been addressing through specific measures, these problems continue to exist. She examines these strategies in her paper and provides recommendations. The Social Watch Research Team’s paper on “Gender and Poverty: A case of Entwined Inequalities” makes a more focused argument about gender-blindness of poverty indicators and proposing a more gender-inclusive approach to measuring poverty from a gender perspective.
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

There are two vignettes for this chapter. The first is a short report on a conference. The second, the UNDP-UNEP PEI ‘Poverty-Environment Initiative in the Kyrgyz Republic: Outcomes of Phase 1’ report, can be found at the end of the handbook in the Supplementary section.

Photo 1: Emil Akhmatbekov

PEI organized a Regional Central Asian Conference on “Effecting Synergies between Inclusive Economic Growth, Environmental Sustainability, Gender Equality and Development for Transformative Change” was held on November 12th – 13th, 2015 in the American University of Central Asia.

Conference rationale:

September 2015 has marked the start of a global transformation towards sustainable development. The 2030 agenda includes Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on women’s empowerment, gender equality and environmental sustainability and calls for a transformative approach were development issues are addressed in an integrated manner. For example, there is mounting evidence on the link
between promoting women’s equality and economic empowerment (SDG #5), combating climate change (SDG#13) and achieving environmental sustainability (SDG#15), and access to sustainable energy (SDG #7). This intersection approach offer opportunities to better address issues of poverty, environmental degradation and gender justice. However, the effective integration of all three components of economic, social and environmental sustainable development in local policies and strategies continues to be discussed among practitioners, scholars and analysts in Central Asia and around the world.

Conference goals:

1. Building a common understanding about the linkages between gender equality, women’s empowerment, environmental sustainability and development among practitioners and policy makers in Central Asia.
2. Creating a solid knowledge base on the integration and implementation of gender equality-environment related objectives and targets in national 2030 agenda and SDG planning processes.

Conference agenda:

The conference was an endeavor to support effective integration of gender equality goals to regional/national development planning processes through informing policy, practice and programming. Conference’s keynote addresses and reports informed participants about recent global frameworks on fair and inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability, gender equality and economic empowerment. Discussing evidence from the Central Asia on how women’s equal access and control over economic and natural resources not only improves the lives of individuals, families and communities, but also helps ensure the sustainability of the environment. Experts also discussed interlinkages between these dimensions gaps that need to be addressed in the new development framework – SDGs. Some specific case studies and best practices were presented to illustrate the current situation as a point of reference for future decisions to make. The experts concluded that Women’s economic empowerment is a prerequisite to inclusive green economic growth and women’s
role is essential in the design of environmentally sustainable solutions and methodologies including those addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.

**Conference Executive Summary**

The new Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 calls for an integrated approach to development. Women’s rights and gender equality, environment and climate change are cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed simultaneously to advance sustainable development and to address existing inequalities. Yet, there is a lack of expertise and knowledge on the link between gender equality, climate change and environmental sustainability globally and in Central Asia.

To further explore these linkages and to contextualize the sustainable development agenda in Central Asia, the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, UN Women Country office in Kyrgyzstan and the American University of Central Asia joined hands to organize a regional conference on ‘Gender Equality and Sustainable Development for Transformative Change’ in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 12-13 November, 2015. The conference brought together 105 experts, government representatives, UN organizations, civil society and academia.

The conference’s keynote addresses and reports informed participants about recent global frameworks on fair and inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability and gender equality and economic empowerment. Discussing evidence from the Central Asia on how women’s equal access and control over economic and natural resources not only improves the lives of individuals, families and communities, but also helps ensure the sustainability of the environment. Experts also discussed how gaps need to be responded in the new development framework – SDGs. One of key focus of the conference addressed women’s economic empowerment as a pre-requisition of inclusive economic growth with green jobs opportunities, environmentally sustainable solutions and methodologies including specific considerations of climate change and biodiversity loss.

In Central Asia women headed households tend to be poorer than male headed households and while the overall poverty level has decreased (e.g. in Kyrgyzstan) women’s poverty increased. The conference highlighted the important role that women play in the management of environment and natural resources but also the challenges faced by women due to traditional stereotypes. Even as heads
of households, women are less likely to own land and property, livestock and agricultural machinery in the region and are underrepresented in natural resource management committees. Further, environmental degradation and climate change poses additional risks to vulnerable groups as it may affect natural capital and reduce agricultural productivity.

The conference highlighted a number of projects that have increased women’s economic returns from the use of natural resources through trainings, capacity building, the formation of women’s associations and local community mobilization the project targeting women resulted women’s improved confidence and increased incomes. Women’s involvement in the project activities have also empowered them to strengthen their decision making power at the household level, in natural resource committees and in local policy processes. The project also enhanced agricultural productivity of targeted communities.

The need to capitalize on the lessons learned from the pilot projects to inform national policy and budget processes was emphasized. In this process it is important to keep in mind that environment and gender equality issues are not of exclusive concerns of respective ministries, but they are also relevant to ministries across a range of sectors including finance, economy and development, which all have a responsibility to identify and address the differentiated opportunities and challenges of men and women to achieve sustainable development goals and gender equality.

Gender analysis, promotion of equal participation of men and women in decision making, evidence on economic benefits of gender equality, capacity building; gender-responsive budgeting and tracking climate change and environmental expenses from gender perspective are all important tools used to influence national policy and budget processes to be more gender responsive and promote sustainability. Experiences of UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative and UN Women of this type of work were presented at the conference.

As countries in the region move forward to contextualize the Sustainable Development Goals there is a need to strengthen the knowledge of current and potential implications of climate change and environmental degradation to inform gender responsive and sustainable development strategies. Correspondingly, there is a need to expand women’s and local communities’ knowledge and training on environmental sustainability and climate smart agricultural practices.

The conference helped to create common understanding of the issue of integration of gender equality and environment issues into development of the region, create knowledge base to subsequently inform policy making and provided opportunities for networking and cooperation.
The conference materials allowed for formulation of conclusions and recommendations for follow-up action. Recommendations pertain to cross-national cooperation, capacity building, networking, research and financing. More specifically, successfully bringing gender equality and environment into development requires knowledge of new global policy frameworks, operation of national processes and methodological capacities and skills as well as introducing appropriate fiscal reforms with the support of the ministry of economy.

Recommendations were put forward for various groups of stakeholders to take into serious account. They focused on increased partnership between national governments, donor organizations and civil society for collaborative development of coordinating mechanisms for effective SDGs implementation. On the national level cross-sector approach must be enhanced in policy making and national decision making to ensure that gender and environment-sensitive analysis is part of the process. All this requires relevant and high quality capacity; both local and international, building of the former is a requirement. Importantly, finance must be made available to support relevant activities. Here contribution of environmentally and socially enabling fiscal policy and contributions from the ministry of finance are indispensable. Local knowledge and bottom-up consultations generated within quality research will help produce in-depth analysis and understanding of the problems for the most vulnerable groups. The role of universities and think tanks in these processes cannot be underestimated.
Lesson Plan

Reflective Writing – 10-15 minutes
Writing prompts should address the main components, arguments, or examples from the case and the reading. The goal of this writing is twofold. Firstly, it is to allow each student some time to process the topic through writing, in a minimally directed fashion. Secondly, it is to allow the students the opportunity to gain valuable practice writing. These pieces are ungraded and are meant solely for the student’s benefit rather than assessment.

The faculty member should prepare the question beforehand. Some possible questions that could be used are:

- What is the main takeaway for you from these pieces?
- How does the case study complicate or highlight issues raised in the reading?
- How does the case from Kyrgyzstan relate to your home country?

Discussion – 45 minutes
The aim in this first part of the discussion is to become coming to grips with the topic and texts read. The discussion should start with sharing of the reflective pieces that the students just previously wrote.

During this time, the faculty member should build on the students’ reflections and insights, seeking to form bridges between these experiences and ideas with those of the readings and case studies. It is especially important to get students to work through the case study and apply some of the insights, stories, or thoughts from these vignettes to their own lives and countries.

The hope is that in this first conversation the faculty leads the group in gaining an understanding not simply of the topic but of working through the vignette; and connecting that with the local context. This is consistent with most first classes.

Concluding Discussion – 5-15 minutes
The concluding discussion should seek to bring together the work done during the Activity with the previous discussions. As part of this, the faculty member is strongly encouraged to bring discussions from previous class periods into conversation with the current topics. Through this, the aim is to start forming stronger connections between the topics over the entire period of the course.
Readings


Chapter 2. Linkages Between Poverty, Environment, and Gender in Development Practices

Photo 2: Zhenish, Myrzabekova, and Kim
Introduction

Gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable environmental development are intrinsically linked. These links cut across social, economic, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development. Serious considerations to how development effects women, as well as women’s vital contribution to economic progress, are important for successful sustainable development and poverty eradication policies. Initiatives which engage women as stakeholders have already proven to enhance sustainable livelihoods of local communities and national economies.

The UNDP’s (2012) publication “Powerful Synergies. Gender Equality, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability” puts forward several key messages which acknowledge the critical, mutually reinforcing linkages between gender equality and sustainable development. The authors argue that by so doing “we can create a society that maintains and regenerates the environment, respects human rights and provides women and men, girls and boys with the lives and the future they deserve” (p. 2). The key messages from the publication are:

- Linkages between gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable development should be recognized and reflected in policies and practices. Entrenching women’s rights within the outcomes, commitments and governing frameworks for sustainable development will enhance human rights frameworks.
- Securing women’s active and equal participation and leadership in sustainable development efforts will better inform the green economy and promotes benefits for women, men, girls and boys. This is because women are key economic actors and agents of sustainable development and consumption. As primary caretakers of families, communities and natural resources, women have accumulated specific knowledge and skills about local conditions and ecological resources.
- Sustainable development that promotes human well-being and green growth requires transforming the economic system to be more inclusive and gender-responsive.
- Promoting economic opportunities for women is critical to creating a sustainable and inclusive economic system, and will enhance sustainable development.
- The institutional framework for sustainable development should be gender-responsive. Policies and programming to empower women can strengthen and better integrate the economic, environmental, and social strands of sustainable development.
- Funding for sustainable development in general, and climate change mitigation and adaptation in
particular, needs to benefit and be accessible to women, particularly women living in poverty.

- Renewed commitments to sustainable development should include a focus on women’s access to cleaner, more efficient energy sources and technologies for household and productive activities.
- Sustainability and equity provide a framework for revisiting urban planning, management and governance. These should take into consideration women’s daily lives, needs and priorities.
- Girls’ education is a critical strategy to mitigate environmental degradation and climate change as well as drive sustainable development.

Making Links

This publication demonstrates that for over 20 years securing global agreements on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and sustainable development in concrete areas of actions has worried governments, women’s organizations, and international institutions. What is increasing is the recognition that gender equality and women’s empowerment are indispensable for effective sustainable development. One of its authors, Irene Dankelman, discusses the links between environment, gender and sustainable development with a focus on climate change polices and challenges in her chapter called “On the road to sustainable development: Promoting gender equality and addressing climate change”. She unpacks the concept of climate change, as well as its manifestations and policies from a gendered perspective. The author argues that exclusion of gender aspects not only undermines the projects’ and policies’ potential but threaten to exacerbate existing inequalities and hinder progress towards gender justice.

Paoo Galizzi and Alena Herklotz in the same volume describe how gender is incorporated in international environmental law. Their article, titled “Missing in action: Gender in international environmental law”, argues that international environmental legal instruments have paid insufficient attention to the role that women play in environmental and sustainable development. Ukujeva and Kim (2014) also argue that despite some progress on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 3 gender equality and women’s empowerment remain an “unfinished business” across all countries.

September 2015 marks a shift in the global development agenda as world leaders formally adopt the post-2015 “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development” document. The new sustainability agenda aims to address the root causes of poverty and inequality and the universal need for development that works for all people. In this post-2015 agenda the goal on gender equality
incorporates many more areas than the one in the MDGs. The new stand-alone SDG on gender equality has targets on violence against women and girls, harmful practices, unpaid care work, women’s political, economic and public participation, sexual and reproductive rights, access and rights to economic resources, use of enabling technology, and policies and legislation on gender equality. Based on these developments and the promise that the new sustainable agenda will address the dimensions that lag behind and build on the achievements of the MDGs, practitioners, scholars and analysts around the world ask questions about how to effectively localize these global commitments around the globe.

**Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

**Targets (inter alia):**

- Ensure women’s full effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision – making in political, economic and public life.
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.


Various attempts have been made in order to bridge the gaps between those elements. Bina Agarwal (1997) coined the term GEP (V) Index (the Gender-Environment-Poverty vulnerability Indices) for ranking states by their extent of gender bias, poverty incidence and environmental risks taken together to provide pointers on the regions which warrant immediate policy attention for helping the most disadvantaged section of the population affected by environmental decline. The Environment and Gender Index (EGI) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Switzerland assesses the conditions for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the environmental arena responding to the problem of lacking integration between environmental and gender programming on global level. The goal of the index is to offer a standardized mechanism to measure country performance at the intersection of gender, environment, and sustainable development for the implementation of global
agreements, promotion of transparency and accountability, expanding access to environmental information and aid effectiveness. Recognizing serious challenges ensuring that gender equality and women’s empowerment are central to environmental decision-making and sustainable development EGI provides a more independent monitoring mechanism that bridges these gaps by measuring country performance at the intersection of gender, environment, and sustainable development. Yet, while national level indicators like GEP or EGI provide some representation of the state’s position in terms of its situation vis-a-vis women’s empowerment and environmental protection, a deeper understanding about the issue that would incorporate a more ‘people-centered’ approach continues to be required. Local practices, community-level activities, locally-defined challenges and opportunities have a strong potential to create a knowledge base for effective policy informing and decision-making and must be carefully studied.

**Linkages and Natural Resources**

Linking gender and environment is often seen through evidence that women and men have different needs in relation to natural resources. Some of the key assumptions of gender issues in natural resources management highlight that rural women and men have different roles, responsibilities, and knowledge in managing natural resources.

Rights to and access to natural resources such as land, water, forests, animals are highly gendered as well as access to new technology, information and training related to natural resource management as most of the related initiatives are disproportionately targeted to men. At the same time degradation of the natural resources can lead to new forms of cooperation as well as controversy and conflict between men and women. All this is exacerbated by the fact that women are still largely absent from natural resource-related decision-making processes at all levels.

Compounding this is a set of socially constructed determinants contributing to women’s disempowerment such as insecure land and tenure rights and the double burden of responsibilities inside and outside the household. Men and women are treated differently under legal, political and social regimes and such treatment has implications for their ability to manage resources effectively. All this happens simultaneously with a growing acceptance in the face of the evidence clearly illustrating that addressing gender-specific aspects of natural resources will have an important capacity to provide policy makers with information for more effective natural resource use, biodiversity conservation policies and
provide guidance for equitable access for natural resources. Evidence from around the globe has demonstrated that reduced poverty, sustainable livelihood and food security among rural women and men is a pre-requisite for improved natural resource management practices and protection of the environment. Important inequalities arise when rights and access become biased disadvantaging particular social groups, most often, poor women. The result is a lost opportunity—gender equality could open the door to greater strides in many aspects of natural resource management and sustainable development—as well as the broad reality of gender-blind decision making that further entrenches hardships for women (World Bank 2009). Maximizing the lost opportunity is an ambitious goal especially at the point in time when the global development agenda is transiting to more pronounced sustainable development commitments and the world, including, Central Asian states will seek for local forms of expressions and implementations of the post-2015 goals.

Questions arise about enabling environment for ensuring national realization of gender-integrated environmental development planning and programs. What challenges are there and how are they to be overcome? What kind of knowledge, methodologies, and instruments can be mobilized to support the regional governments to successfully integrate gender into their sustainable development strategies and programs? What opportunities and bottlenecks exist for further progress needs to be made? What lessons have been learnt and what success stories can be up-scaled to successfully achieve the gender equality indicators? While effective integration of gender and environmental issues into relevant development programming continues to be a global challenge, but in Central Asia the problem at hand is that the limited understanding of integration of gender perspectives into environmental policies and programmes prevent full achievement of sustainable development goals.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) are of special importance as they implicate accountability for the realization of the provisions set inter alia recognizing rural women’s rights to benefit from rural development and to be empowered to manage environment through equal access to productive resources.

Adopted in 1995 at the United Nations organized Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action is an international declaration of women’s rights which sets out an expansive vision and landmark set of commitments for achieving gender equality obliging countries to take measures for national and international action for the advancement of women. If implemented, the Platform for Action will enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of
women, improve their health and their access to relevant education and promote their reproductive rights. Supporting the Platform for Action, the UN General Assembly called upon all States, UN agencies and other international organizations as well as NGOs and the private sector to take action to implement its recommendations.


**Twelve priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action:**

A. Women and poverty  
B. Education and training of women  
C. Women and health  
D. Violence against women  
E. Women and armed conflict  
F. Women and the economy  
G. Women in power and decision-making  
H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women  
I. Human rights of women  
J. Women and the media  
K. Women and the environment  
L. The girl-child

Beijing Platform of Action has direct reference to the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. In its point K it states that countries must:

“Encourage, subject to national legislation and consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the effective protection and use of the knowledge, innovations and practices of women of indigenous and local communities, including practices relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies, and endeavor to ensure that these are respected, maintained, promoted and preserved in an ecologically sustainable manner, and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge; in addition, safeguard the existing intellectual property
rights of these women as protected under national and international law; work actively, where necessary, to find additional ways and means for the effective protection and use of such knowledge, innovations and practices, subject to national legislation and consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity and relevant international law, and encourage fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovation and practices”. The Beijing Platform of Action, under its key priority “Women and the Environment”, proposes these important messages:

- Women’s dependence on and unequal access to land, water and other resources and productive assets, compounded by limited mobility and decision-making power in many contexts, also mean that they are disproportionately affected by climate change. Natural disasters, including those related to climate change, have greater impacts on poor women.
- Gender inequalities are worsened by the lack of universal access to improved water sources and modern energy services in terms of the time and labour burden of unpaid work.
- Accelerating progress will require greater efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change, natural disasters, ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss on women and their families; ensuring women’s access and control over land and productive resources and their voice and agency in environmental and sustainable development decision-making and action at all levels. (Source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/environ.htm)

CEDAW promotes improving rural women’s coping opportunities with ecological stresses and adaptive resilience and their participation in climate change discussions. These sources tend to give precedence to different aspects of gender equality (violence against women, political participation, etc.) over women’s environmental needs with little specification of gendered aspects of access to natural resources, conservation of biodiversity or climate change mitigation. At the same time, some key international agreements on sustainable development that Kyrgyzstan ratified explicitly provide for gender equality for their achievement.

**UN Framework Convention on Climate Change**

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) promotes gender balance in recognition that “women are at the center of the climate change challenge. Women are disproportionately
affected by climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods and other extreme weather events, but they also have a critical role in combating climate change. The convention’s supreme decision-making body, the Conference of the parties, COP, at its eighteenth session adopted a decision on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has a mandate on gender which stresses “the important role played by women in regions affected by desertification and/or drought, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, and the importance of ensuring the full participation of both men and women at all levels in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought”. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) also recognizes the “vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirms the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation” (Convention on Biological Diversity, p. 2). It also promotes gender-specific ways in which to document and preserve women’s knowledge of biological diversity. Agenda 21 in its Chapter 24, entitled Global Action for Women towards Sustainable Development, calls upon governments to make the necessary constitutional, legal, administrative, cultural, social and economic changes in order to eliminate all obstacles to women’s full involvement in sustainable development and in public life (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) calls for improvement of the status, health and economic welfare of women and girls through full and equal access to economic opportunities, land, credit, education and health-care services. Rio+20 calls for enhancement of the welfare of women and mobilization of their full potential for sustainable development and poverty eradication. It also promotes the collection, analysis and use of gender sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data.

The United Nations Convention on Biodiversity also has clear commitments to gender equality. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity committed to integrating gender equality into the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity has placed great importance on the fact that gender equality is a prerequisite to poverty eradication and sustainable development. The livelihoods of rural communities are often closely tied to the use and conservation of biodiversity. In these communities, women play a leading role in caring for their families and communities, in sharing their intellectual and social capital, and in protecting and managing biodiversity resources. In many societies, women as well as men are agents of change, but their contributions do not receive equal recognition. Gender equality
between women and men has a cumulative effect of improved biodiversity management and protection, and poverty alleviation for communities (IUCN 2013). Specifically, Paragraph 13 of the Preamble to the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity states:

“Recognizing also the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation...”.

Task 4 of the programme of work asks:

“Parties to develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for promoting the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities with specific provisions for the full, active and effective participation of women in all elements of the programme of work, taking into account the need to:

a. Build on the basis of their knowledge;
b. Strengthen their access to biological diversity;
c. Strengthen their capacity on matters pertaining to the conservation, maintenance and protection of biological diversity;
d. Promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge; and
e. Promote culturally appropriate and gender specific ways in which to document and preserve women’s knowledge of biological diversity”. 
Vignettes from PEI Kyrgyzstan

The vignettes this week are two reports from UNDP-UNEP PEI. The first is directly below. The second, located in the Supplementary section at the end of the handbook is the ‘UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative ECIS Gender Strategy 2015-2017’ by the PEI Regional Team.

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Ukueva and Kim (2014), taking Kyrgyzstan as an example note an apparent lack of specific literature on the topic and discuss available published resources remain markedly scarce. Government reports on the issue of national policies addressing gender-aware environmental protection in Kyrgyzstan have been produced in obligation of the Kyrgyz Government to implement more than 30 international treaties and protocols on human rights enshrining gender equality and 13 international environmental conventions and 3 protocols it ratified. However, as Ukueva and Kim (2014) assessed environment-focused national reports, research and reviews, they observed that the extent to which gender issues were covered ranged from little to zero. In few cases where “gender” is used as a word it largely lacks analytic aspect to it. For instance, a report might include an expression “gender equality” or even “gender justice” in its texts but only in mentioning or as something aspirational. This finding is consistent with the Environment and Gender Index (EGI) (Global Gender Office of International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2013). It states that only 11 percent of available UNFCCC reports from Kyrgyzstan include some information on gender (IUCN 2013). 12 percent of reports on CBD have any mentioning of gender. None of the national UNCCD reports include gender analysis. General country performance rating results indicate that Kyrgyzstan belongs to the group of “moderate” performers on the EGI (0.54). Its rating is number 35 out of 72 countries, where Finland is the highest performer (0.84) and Democratic Republic of Congo is the lowest performer (0.27).

Lack of effective integration of gender issues into national environmental planning and reports is alarming not only because of its social implications but also because it undermines the quality of national implementation of the global conventions. Review of the available national reports produced within the frameworks of the aforementioned international documents demonstrates a serious lack of integration of gender issues.
Two national research reports focus specifically on examining gender in terms of core environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity and access to natural resources. One is by Korotenko et al. (2013) “Gender, Environment and Climate Change” research report which analyzes the dynamics of gender relations in the Kyrgyz Republic in the context of changing environment. The report is broad-based encompassing many sectors such as gender division of labor, access to resources, and decision-making. The research is based on the premise that “climate change is not gender-neutral” (p. 43) and that connections between gender and climate are the issue of justice, security and human rights. Two large chapters comprise the report. First one focuses on a nationwide analysis climate change and its gender dimension and is mainly based on secondary resources. The second chapter presents findings from an empirical study in two provinces of Kyrgyzstan.

The authors (Korotenko et al, 2013) begin with a claim that linking climate and gender inequality is new in Kyrgyzstan both on the level of theory and practice. Whereas globally women are more vulnerable to climate change risks any long-term social measures for climate change adaptation are insufficient due to lack functional and comprehensive policy. The authors are particularly concerned that climate change trends and associated decline in the availability of natural resources will even deteriorate women’s vulnerability in terms of accessing them, having control over them and participation in decision making regarding their use. Available climate programs are largely gender-blind. Women tend to be excluded from the decision-making processes which have defining impact on access to natural resources. The report makes an important claim that women must be seen as important actors in distribution of natural resources and reduction of conflicts that may arise around this issue because they have both experience and knowledge for contributing to sustainability of their community.

In analyzing the core trends of climate change in Kyrgyzstan, the authors of the report highlight as the “most vulnerable” such sectors as water resources, health, agriculture, and climate emergencies. Analyzing access to water, Korotenko et al. emphasize that gender-sensitive water resources management is recognized and stipulated in many international documents including the UN-Millennium Summit (New York, 2000) and World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio 92, Johannesburg, 2002). However, in Kyrgyzstan gender issues in sustainable development is profoundly lacking. The authors claim that “no quality data and research studies on consideration of gender issues in water resources management, and finally, there are only few specialists with practical skills of application of general gender basics in water resources management”. The authors’ own field research shows that irrigation continues to be considered a “male” domain with 60% of respondents indicating exactly such division of
labor among men and women where men irrigate, whereas women weed, process crops, and collect harvest. The authors make recommendations to better involve women in the management of irrigation systems for a more efficient and fair use of water resources. The report indicates that 75% of respondents experience problems with irrigation, unfair distribution of water, and poor irrigation infrastructure. Nearly all women in the targeted areas did not participate in decisions about water. In the section called “access to adequate sanitation”, the report refers to data about access for men and women to the decision—making for water at different level including number of key specialists, managers, membership of Water User Associations (WUA). In 2009 women only made 18% of people working in the Water User Associations, among them 6 women were chairing the WUA, 9 were vice-chairs, 160 worked as accountants. In discussing accessing safe drinking water, the report provides data about women’s roles in utilization and purification of drinking water noting that women are better informed about the quality of water and about how to increase its safety. Similar to the above mentioned analysis, Korotenko et al. observes serious problems with women’s access to land resources recognizing that agricultural land reform in 1990s was largely gender-blind. As a result, distribution of farm land and their formalization was biased toward men giving them ownership in 84.9% of cases. 64.17% of these male land owners do not allocate land to their female children. Women constitute only 15.1% of the leaders of peasant communities (farms) in 2010. They tend to be excluded from the process of resource distribution and, subsequently, have less access to them. The report states that in 43.3% of the surveyed households men make decisions regarding land and livestock, only in 27.5% of cases decisions are made by both women and men.

Another study by Djangaracheva et al. (2007), “Access of men and women to natural resources in Kyrgyzstan”, provides a detailed description of findings generated within a 2007 sociological study investigating public perceptions of the access to natural resources in Kyrgyzstan. This document focuses on presenting participants attitudes, opinions, impressions, and expectations in relation to women and men’s access to water, land, medical plants, fish, and forests in two (out of seven) provinces of Kyrgyzstan. It recognizes a problem of a profound lack of any systematic research focusing specifically on investigating access to and control over natural resources by differentiated social groups. Conclusions claim that men have a higher access to productive natural resources and more decision-making power in the management of the resource and control over the income received from the resource use. The reported causes for such inequality lies in the historically developed power and property relationships, gender stereotypes and women’s low representation in
decision-making organizations. The report makes a recommendation that a well-developed effective strategy for poverty reduction and awareness raising can serve to better involve women and men into improving their well-being and quality of life.
Lesson Plan

Reflective Writing – 10-15 minutes
Writing prompts should address the main components, arguments, or examples from the case and the reading. The goal of this writing is twofold. Firstly, it is to allow each student some time to process the topic through writing, in a minimally directed fashion. Secondly, it is to allow the students the opportunity to gain valuable practice writing. These pieces are ungraded and are meant solely for the student’s benefit rather than assessment.

The faculty member should prepare the question beforehand. Some possible questions that could be used are:

- What is the main takeaway for you from these pieces?
- How does the case study complicate or highlight issues raised in the reading?
- How does the case from Kyrgyzstan relate to your home country?
- What link between the topics is most interesting to you?
- How do you see this building on last week’s discussion?

Discussion – 10 minutes
The aim in this first part of the discussion is to become coming to grips with the topic and texts read. The discussion should start with sharing of the reflective pieces that the students just previously wrote.

During this time, the faculty member should build on the students’ reflections and insights, seeking to form bridges between these experiences and ideas with those of the readings and case studies. It is especially important to get students to work through the case study and apply some of the insights, stories, or thoughts from these vignettes to their own lives and countries.

Activity – 25-35 minutes
The activity for this lesson is a Concept Map. Concept Maps are a way of visually representing information and allowing students to think in new and interesting ways about the material that has been covered in the readings for this week.
The Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University has laid out a great system for simple and easy concept mapping. They state:

“To structure a concept map exercise for students, follow these three steps:

1. Create a focus question that clearly specifies the issue that the concept map should address, such as “What are the potential effects of cap-and-trade policies?” or “What is materials science?”
2. Tell students (individually or in groups) to begin by generating a list of relevant concepts and organizing them before constructing a preliminary map.
3. Give students the opportunity to revise. Concept maps evolve as they become more detailed and may require rethinking and reconfiguring.

Encourage students to create maps that:

- Employ a hierarchical structure that distinguishes concepts and facts at different levels of specificity
- Draw multiple connections, or cross-links, that illustrate how ideas in different domains are related
- Include specific examples of events and objects that clarify the meaning of a given concept

(Eberly Center 2015)

We encourage you to choose a specific element of the readings that most connects with you as the faculty or that resonates from last week’s readings and discussion with the group.

**Concluding Discussion – 5-15 minutes**

The concluding discussion should seek to bring together the work done during the Activity with the previous discussions. As part of this, the faculty member is strongly encouraged to bring discussions from previous class periods into conversation with the current topics. Through this, the aim is to start forming stronger connections between the topics over the entire period of the course.
Readings


IUCN (2016b) ‘Inclusion and characterization of women and gender equality considerations in the fifth national reports to the CBD’. *IUCN*. Washington DC: IUCN.


Chapter 3. Methodologies: Participatory Research & Beyond

Photo 3: Zhenis, Myrzabekova, and Kim
Introduction

Up to this point the class has been focused on working through understanding the variables and ways that poverty and gender come together with environmental issues. Just as any analysis requires a theoretical foundation, it requires a method of analysis and research. In this chapter, then, we turn our eye to understanding and bringing a greater understanding to a few possible methods can be used to do research on these topics, and which, in reading and analyzing research, are crucial to understand to fully grapple with the intricacies of the research presented.

Methodologies – methods used to conduct research are of great importance to those working in the field of gender and sustainable development. Methodology refers to the process of how to conduct research, i.e., what to study, what to observe what to measure and how to analyze the data. Practitioners and academics have already examined positive and negative aspects of a variety of methodologies used to collect gender-related data. Methods are about precise technique of carrying out a study. Most resources agree that there no one methods that is inherently better than any other but what counts most is the research approach. In this chapter we focus on two particular forms of research methods, that of feminist methodology and participatory methodology.

Feminist Research Methodology

Feminist methodology was born from feminist movements in the 1960s and the 1970s where a group of people challenged the conventional norms of research and developed a different mode of inquiry which addressed the problem of a lack of women’s representation in mainstream social sciences and prejudice against women in interpreting the workings of society. Feminist research is often defined as research conducted on the basis of the experiences of women in what is perceived as a male dominated world. New knowledge is created coming from different contributions and different perspective of thought. According to Breyton (1997), Patricia Maguire offered the premise that feminist methodology and feminism in general is about understanding that women face some form of oppression; commitment to understand female oppression and exploitation in all of its forms; a commitment towards elimination of all forms of female oppression. There are four main goals to this trajectory of feminist research methods:

- The ability to uncover and overcome type of bias in research
• The ability to detect and create social change
• A concept or method to illustrate human diversity
• An acknowledge of the credentials and position of the researcher

Feminist methodologies use both qualitative and quantitative techniques but qualitative methodology is used more frequently. The choice will depend on the research question, underlying philosophy of research, researcher’s preferences and skills. In quantitative research the data produced are always numerical. As such they are analyzed using statistical methods. The most common sources of quantitative data include surveys, observations and secondary data.

Qualitative research does not involve the production of numerical data; instead, qualitative analysis results in rich data that gives an in-depth picture and is especially useful for exploring how and why things have happened. Sources of qualitative data include interviews, focus groups, secondary data, observations. Analysis of such data takes one of the forms such as content analysis, grounded analysis, social network analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis.

In order to create social change any method must include and respect the participants as change agents. Important, such kinds of methods must acknowledge diversity among women themselves, i.e. that not all women see the social world in the same way. Feminist research is ultimately about relationships and power. Like participatory research women and local people are often subordinate in their own social context, while outside researchers are seen as experts who impose their views. Transforming this dynamic can be achieved when people articulate their views and express their knowledge through describing and analyzing their own situations and problems.

Participatory Research Methods

Participatory research has an objective of handing power from the researcher to the research participants, women, community members and community-based organizations. Participatory research comprises a range of methodological approaches and technique wherein participants have control over the research agenda, the process and actions. Participants themselves are the ones who analyze and reflect on the finding and conclusions.

Importantly, most participatory research is also action-oriented. Participants move from discussing the problems to possible solutions to them and specific actions to be undertaken. This
addresses the challenge of women being absent from public forums which further excludes them and empowers groups which are already empowered.

A range of techniques are used in participatory research. Those include focus groups and multi-stakeholder meetings, action research, oral testimonies, participatory inquiry, story collection, photodigital stories, photovoice, drawing and essay writing competitions, participatory videos, immersions, theatre for development, reality check approach.

Methods & Methodologies

As part and parcel of any understanding of methodology, it is critical to briefly mention what it is that comprises method in the direct sense. What methods are is best summed up by the singular word “how?” Or, less briefly, “How are you going to conduct the research?”; or “how are you going to find and then analyze the data?”

With that in mind, as should be clear from above, methodology is not simply how one goes about conducting research, but is part and parcel of a broader overarching theoretical set of commitments and attachments. As such, when beginning to work through methodological questions, one must always first begin from questions about what approach best suits the research question and the accompanying elements of the project.

In this way, the aim of the readings and the introduction for this week is not to provide a thorough and complete overview of methodologies or even a single method; but to open up a discussion about the importance of selecting the appropriate method and the ways that, incumbent in these choices, are a variety of distinct theoretical paradigms and perspectives.
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

The Vignette this week is a research report. You should read through the introduction and pieces of the report. The Research Report is made up of some basic information about the context, and then specific cases. These cases can be used both during this week as well as throughout the rest of the course to give details and life to the readings.

Case-based analysis of existing economic and environmental practices of rural women in Suusamyr ayil okmotu

By: Elena A. Kim

Research Report

This research report is a qualitative analysis of women-led economic practices in Suusamyr Aiyl Okmotu in the Kyrgyz Republic. The report is based on primary data collected in early November 2014 in the respective locale. The researcher selected five different local women who were involved in various economic activities for an in-depth case study. The data collection methods included firsthand observation and in-depth interviews. This report offers five narratives which demonstrate diversity of economic activities existing in Suusamyr Aiyl Okmotu with special focus on concrete challenges, perspectives, successes and failures. A more general analysis demonstrates shared features that all the studied cases explicate and illuminate. Each case is complemented with visual illustrations and relevant quotations.

Background

In contemporary Kyrgyzstan where poverty is an alarming and a growing problem majority of the population (more than 65 %) live in rural areas. The overall poverty rate today is 40,8% whereas 9,4% of the rural population lives in extreme poverty (RDF, 2014). Among the rural poor, women tend to be more vulnerable to poverty and deprivation. Fifty three percent of rural households which are headed by women are classified as poor, 15% of them live in extreme poverty. Rural women tend to have insufficient quality of basic service delivery and are more inclined to unemployment than men. When
employed, women’s labor is paid less than men. At home rural women spend 3.5 times more time on maintaining their households and childcare than men. At the same time they experience a limited access to natural and economic resources and are less likely to own land and property such as livestock and agricultural machinery⁴. While women constitute the majority of labour force in agriculture, their contributions to economy and household activities are largely not accounted for ⁶. They rarely take equitable part in decision making in the public spheres. Today, rural women represent only 6% of members of pasture management committees, 18% of Water Users Associations, 13,6% of local councils and 4,65% heads of LSGs.

Locale:
This report looks into a particular rural area in Kyrgyzstan called Suusamyr Aiyl Okmotu in Suusamyr Valley. Geographically, the area is situated between the ridges of the Kyrgyz and Talas Ala-Too Mountains about 150 km away from the capital city Bishkek. The valley is situated at the altitude of 2000-3200 meters and has an extension about 155 km. This area is characterized by harsh climate, where temperature in the winter time descends down to – 50 degrees Celsius. In the summer the valley turns into lush meadows which have often been described as the best pasture lands in the country. Organizationally, Suusamyr Aiyl Okmotu belongs to Chui Administrative Region. It has a population of about 6 000 people and consists of five villages. Each village has a school and a FAP (a healthcare setting). Additionally, the main village (Suusamyr) has a hospital, post office, police office, etc. Local population is predominantly comprised by middle-aged adults and older people. Youth typically migrate for urban parts of the country pursuing higher education or in a search for a better cash income. The population is nearly exclusively involved in agriculture, namely, transhumant herding. Livestock is often used as capital stock that can be turned into cash or used as direct payment. Contemporary land use may also include cultivation of potatoes and some vegetables as well as honey-production. Tourism has a great potential in the valley but is still underdeveloped. Indeed, despite its proximity to the capital city Suusamyr region still remains to be a “bleak and generally little-visited part of the country”.

According to the director of a local community radio, Suusamyr Aiyl Okmotu is both geographically and informationally isolated. Villagers have only access to one local TV channel and only since recently, to one local community-based radio channel. According to the executive secretary of the local government, there are no families which can be officially rated as “poor” in this Aiyl Okmotu. However, this statistics is informed by the definition of poverty that is based on the numerical calculations of the household assets. Since every household has at least some livestock they
automatically cannot be considered poor. However, numbers aside, one can easily observe that possession of cattle does not prevent families from living in poverty. For instance, as one informant shares, there are many families with few cows and sheep but low or no cash income. In such cases, these families cannot even afford consuming their own products because those are sold for cash money.

![Photo 1. Suusamyr valley. Source: Kim, 2014](image)

**Women’s situation in Suusamyr**

Situation of women in this particular village is rarely described in available sources. A glimpse into relevant literature demonstrates that often women living in Suusamyr are subsumed under the more general descriptions of Chui oblast. However, it seems obvious that due to the specificity of the area, more attention needs to be given to the particular situation of women living in Suusamyr Ayil Okmotu. Due to the local climate and transhumant lifestyle, living conditions in Suusamyr Ayil Okmotu are difficult in general. However, women who are primarily responsible for maintaining their households, carrying for children and tending domestic animals experience particular challenges. Most of the domestic labor is done manually and majority of the houses lack so-called “conditions” such as running water, electric-heating, etc. Women typically have to fetch drinking water from outside and heat their houses with coal and wood, all of which add to their labor-intensive domestic routines. Some of the
more financially advantaged households running water and electric water heaters installed in their houses, but having those is still considered to be a privilege rather than a usual situation.

Both men and women are involved in cattle breeding, however, it is typically the men, who are traditionally thought to be in charge. Men of the families are typically registered as cattle breeding farmers in the Aïyl Okmotu, with the quantity of livestock in each farm indicated in the employment registrars. Women are not listed in this registrars. If they are not engaged in waged labor somewhere else, they are considered as officially unemployed.

In terms of division of labor, women take active part in tending the cattle. In the wintertime when the livestock are in paddocks, women’s responsibilities include feeding, ensuring animals’ access to drinking water and salt, giving straw beddings (for the sheep), checking for illnesses and injuries, and milking the cows. In the summertime, families move together to alpine pasture lands (called “dzhabløo”) and settle there until mid-Autumn. The role of women in this seasonal herding is also indispensable. When the researcher suggested a scenario in which shepherds go to meadows by themselves, one informant laughed and said “I have never heard of any single shepherd who ever goes to dzhabløo alone. It is impossible. They just don’t do it”. While in dzhabløo women provide domestic care, maintain the yurts (dome-shaped felt tents), care for domestic animals used as food sources, and also herd the animals. Additionally, women take primary responsibility for making of kumis (fermented drink made from mare’s milk). It is a culturally-important dairy product that local population traditionally consumes and also a widespread source of income for the families - it is very popular among tourists.

Local government in Suusamyr Aïyl Okmotu is comprised of eleven members. Since last year, three members are women. However, according to the director of Suusamyr community radio, the role of the latter in the local politics has so far been invisible. The same informant explains this by the traditional division of gender roles in their community that continues to gain its prominence. She beckons that “Women must always wear head-scarves; they should not be wearing pants. They are expected to be at home, and not leave their husbands in order to work outside. Young girls do not want to stay here, because there are no good conditions for women, there are restrictions for women. They want to go live in the city where they have more freedom”.

An interview with a male participant supports that. When I asked him about economic contributions of the women in the village, he answered that “women are always at home, they are all housewives. They don’t work”. Indeed, many women, even those with university degrees have problems
with employment in the village. They become officially unemployed and maintaining their households and children becomes their major form of employment. However, this research reveals a number of significant but less visible types of economic activities that local women choose to do. It became apparent that women find various opportunities for generating additional income maximizing on what works well for them. In what follows is a more detailed description of five specific cases which illustrate industrious, creative and business-minded local incentives run by women living in Suusamyr. The range of the activities strikes by its diversity, from a small-scale production of traditional winter felt boots (valenki) and home-based poultry farm to an independent sewing workshop and nationally recognized applied art.


Case 1. Nuria¹. Production of traditional winter felt boots (“valenki”)

Nuria is a 51-year-old widow with five children. She used to work as a salesperson in Naryn where her husband also had a job. After he died she moved to live with his parents in Suusamyr. She never remarried, instead, took care of her children and father-in-law until he died last year. Nuria never sought a

¹ For ethical reasons all of the informants in this report are disguised under pseudonyms
formal job. Occasionally she made use of her handiwork to earn some additional income. Her father-in-law was a World War II veteran and supported the entire family with his relatively high pension. Since he died Nuria has become the head of her household and an only source of cash income.

Valenki (traditional winter felt boots) is the type of winter footwear that all local men and women wear in the snow (Photo 3). Small-scale production of valenki recently became a reliable source of income for Nuria’s family. Few years ago she tried to save some money and decided not to buy winter boots for her children but to make them herself. Nuria attended an older woman-villager who knew how to make them and asked to teach her. After this training Nuria made valenki for all of her family members every year. When other villagers saw her boots they started coming to Nuria’s house and placed orders. Since then every winter she made these boots for sale.

In the course of the interview, it became apparent that Nuria’s valenki are in high demand. By end of October she already had twenty new orders. She also had to decline a bigger order from a local store because she knew she would not be able to make the supply on time. “They always ask me to give them my valenki to place on their shelves. But I don’t make so many”, she says. Evidently, the production process is not an easy one, but a rather time and labor-intensive tedious manual work. Nuria’s very particular attitude towards the quality of her products adds to the labor intensity. To illustrate, Nuria in principle prepares her own felt (itself a very complex manual work) refusing to buy it from anybody else. She needs to be confident in the quality of the felt and can only trust it if she knows how it was made. She says “I know that boots from my felt will maintain a sturdy shape for at least a few years”.

![Valenki](image.jpg)
Additionally, Nuria applies her artistic skills in the design and decoration of the boots. She created a model for women with a more fitted design, elegant and modern shape and leather ornaments with a zip in the middle for an easier slip (Photo 3). Also, Nuria offers long-term warranty service to her customers. She repairs her boots for no additional price even after they have been worn for a few years. “They come back to me and ask me to mend a sole, or a zip or a leather ornament. I fix those and don’t take money. If they wear my valenki for three years, this is very good!”

Nuria’s production is characterized by high quality, individual tailor-made approach and customer-oriented service. It is also apparent that these activities also have profit-making qualities with a considerable potential. According to Nuria’s calculations, the prime cost per pair including the costs of materials such as felt, leather and woolen fabric accounts to less than 500 som. The price Nuria charges equals 1000 som per pair, i.e., a double of its prime cost. Additionally, Nuria continuously works on minimizing the costs and comes up with different ideas. For example, she does not purchase new woolen fabrics but buys old woolen coats from a flea market in a nearby town. “One woolen coat costs about 200 som and will be enough for five pairs of valenki”, she says. Overall, monthly profit estimates to more than ten thousand som.

Receiving income from boot production is significant for the livelihood of Nuria’s family. “When people started asking me to make felt boots for them, I thought that if I sell three pairs, I will buy one ton of coal for winter”, she recollects. Today she earns enough money to provide her household not only with coal but flour, oil and other basic subsistence items. But today, Nuria wants to increase her income. Especially now that the family does not receive support from her father-in-law’s pension while the need for cash increased. She explains, “the money is not enough, because the youngest child is still in high school, older son and his wife live with me and are unemployed, my daughter divorced and left her child with me”. She wants to increase her production; however, there are serious challenges for such a development. It turns out that Nuria makes valenki at night when she has finished her daily routines and her grandchild is asleep. “It does not matter if it is men’s work or women’s work. It does not matter. I do it all”, she says. “I have free time at night. I can sit down and sew. The youth give me a hand sometimes, but they are not interested in it”. These precarious conditions in which Nuria has to carry out her
productive activities interfere with a long-term sustainability of her business and tend to compromise on her health and general physical wellbeing.

Another challenge relates to lack of the primary raw material, i.e., felt. Nuria prepares the felt in the summer because the process requires water and warm temperature. Nuria’s “signature” valenki require particularly thick and sturdy qualities of her felt and she does not manage to produce sufficient amounts. The core problem here is the manual process of production (preparing the wool, washing, carding, etc.). Very shyly Nuria suggests that a wool carding machine could be a solution to this problem. Having such an equipment would enable her to produce more felt, hire additional labor, train new people and oversee their work with less involvement from her side. Nuria contemplates that having a wool carding machine would not only increase her production but diversify her sources of income. She would lend it to other villagers and charge small amounts for this service. In this way, she adds, the machine will not only serve her family but other women who are involved in similar economic activities. Moreover, the machine would be instrumental in helping Nuria implement her cherished plan of passing the handicraft skills to younger women. If she had more felt, she could “invite young women home and teach them how to work with felt. They would help to make valenki, learn and make them for themselves”.

However, Nuria knows that the price for a wool carding machine is significantly beyond what her family can afford. For this reason she never even tried to purchase one or inquire into the current price for such a machine. Not to say that the supply of those machines is known to be very scarce. Nobody in her community has one. She emphasizes that what she needs is a wool carding machine, not the cotton carding machine. Apparently, the latter has already been purchased within one UNDP project, but it does not suit Nuria’s work. She will also need a sewing machine suitable for working with leather. Right now, Nuria only has one regular sewing machine which she uses for all possible purposes.

Nuria’s family has livestock which can be sold to raise money for the equipment. However, using family assets for this purpose is out of the question. Customarily, cattle are not sold for cash unless there is a proper need for that, i.e., funerals, weddings, university tuition, social gatherings, etc. Nuria, too, uses her cattle as a safeguard in important family purposes and wants to save the cattle “in case something urgent comes up”. It is apparent that purchasing felt processing equipment does not qualify the criteria for a proper “good cause”. This may be linked back to the traditional views on the role of women which dissociate them from economic production. What Nuria does for income is considered to be more of a “women’s hobby” rather than a serious business with high potential worth of investments.
Asking for support from the local government is not considered a realistic option. Nuria even laughed at the thought that Aïyl Okmotu might be of any help to her. “I have no hopes related to Aïyl Okmotu. They never helped me. I don’t know if they help anybody at all”.

Case 2. Anara. Felt processing and sewing workshop

Unlike Nuria, the second interviewee, Anara, was quite successful in finding resources to purchase equipment for her business. For ten years Anara ran sewing and felt processing workshop in a small village called Kozhomkul in Suusamyr Aïyl Okmotu. This 50-year-old woman was born and raised in Kozhomkul. After graduating from local school in Anara went to a university in Bishkek and received a degree in mechanical mathematics. After that she returned to the village, got married and taught mathematics and informatics for more than thirty years in the local school. After 1991 Anara started participating in international projects which were operating in the Kozhomkul at that time. As a school teacher she had a good access to information, was accustomed to working outside of home and had a better preparation for seizing the new opportunities offered by the projects’ services and resources. This is how Anara remembers the beginnings:

“We started in 2005 when UNDP Poverty Reduction program helped to create women’s groups. I was a member of such a group and later I became its leader. I became what they called “an activist”. Then, they left and I stayed and using what they taught me opened the workshops. I founded a Public Fund “Demir”, a women’s organization. I wrote a project to the UN Volunteer Fund to renovate the old building for the workshops. This building I rented from Aïyl Okmotu. After that I wrote another project proposal for funding to the UNDP Poverty Reduction Program and purchased equipment for the sewing workshop, sewing machines, and felt processing machine. So, we started. This is how I organized a women’s group”.

It is apparent that Anara’s personal qualities have had a particular importance for her enterprise. Her activism, energy, and experience in public life played an important role in helping her start her activities:

“During the Soviet Union I was an active member of Komsomol, I was active in the Communist Party. Right after the Union collapsed I started working with the UNDP projects, attended seminars, conferences. At that time, there was this ideology that women need to be advanced, they need to be

—but

2 All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth
helped. This is how this idea came to me. I thought that I should also create a women’s group where I will work with them and help them.”

Anara’s motivation for self-development played a significant role in the success she has achieved in running her business:

“”How to run a business”, “How to keep books and finances” and so on, all this knowledge comes from the seminars and educational courses that I went to as part of [international] projects. I also took paid classes if I thought I needed them. I took classes in Marketing, Business, even Agro-business. I took courses such as “Start your own business”, “Improve your business”, “How to improve sales”... all of them. Even now when I hear about different trainings offered, I go and participate. So, I know price-making, how to make different calculations, etc.”

Today, Anara’s business is located in a large one-storey building consisting of two parts. One part of the building is a sewing workshop. In its large room it displays the finished products (Photo 4) and sewing machines. There is an additional room that is used for people who come from outside of the village and stay there for longer periods of time. The felt processing workshop is located in a different part of the building with a separate entrance. There are two large rooms each equipped with a felt processing machine (Photo 5 and 6).

Photo 4. Piles of mattresses produced at Anara’s sewing workshop.
Photo 5. Wool carding machine in Anara’s workshop. Source: Kim, 2014

Photo 6. Piles of unprocessed wool in the felt processing workshop. Source: Kim, 2014
The number of Anara’s employees varies from five to fifteen people. These are typically women between thirty and sixty years of age. Currently, there are only twelve employees, five of which have worked with Anara since the very beginning. She calls them “my women”. The employees produce felt for yurts, shyrdaks, ala-kyizes, dowry packages, mattresses, blankets, etc. Their clients are mostly local farmers and Anara actively works on extending her market. Anara is very proud of the accomplishments her group has made over time.

“We have many successes. We started as only five women, we did everything manually. After we bought the equipment it immediately became easier to make felt”.

Besides organizational achievements, Anara points out personal successes. She admits that her life has had significant financial improvements since she started her business.”It has been five years since I retired and do not work in the school anymore. I would rather be fully involved in this (and she pointed at the pile of the ready mattresses in the middle of the room depicted in the photo 4). Indeed, profitability of Anara’s enterprise is impressive:

“In the school I only could earn maximum of five thousand som per month. Here, my income is about fifty to sixty thousand som in one month. In six months I make about three hundred som. It is a lot more than what I would earn in the school”.

Improvements in financial standing pertain to all of the other women working in the workshops. Anara explains:

“They [women who work here] earn money, I earn money. It is slow, but we earn money. My women are also pensioners or housewives... they receive income too. It is good for these women because they can earn money and attend gatherings, because, you know, in the village life is like that. One has to attend gatherings”.

Positive changes in these women’s life situations go beyond financial improvements. There are apparent social and emotional benefits that these women have gained. Below is what Anara has observed in relation to her employees:

“My women have become close friends. They play the “black cash pool”. They often thank me for their friendship. It is important because in such a small village there are only few sources of entertainment.

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3 Shyrdak and ala-kyiz are Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets included in the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage
4 An informal rotating savings association based on trust
There is no cinema or anything. Friendship brings pleasure. These women go visit each other, have tea parties, etc”.

Anara is very proud about how “her” women adapted their lifestyles to the working schedules in the workshops:

“My women are so glad! They say they prefer coming here instead of being at home. It is better to work here than not. In such way they can do even more. They wake up at 6 am, milk cows and do everything before 9 am so that they can be at work at 9 am. So, they manage to do everything in a much less time. So, they are very happy, and they manage to do everything.”

At the same time, Anara remembers that when she started the workshops her group met some level of resistance and misunderstanding from the villagers. Many people did not understand what these women were doing, why they became part of the women’s group. Their husbands would follow them and force them to go home or check up on them. Only later, when the women started bringing money home the situation changed. Today, some men even insist that their wives go to Anara’s workshop. They call Anara a “business lady” (said in English) and even ask for her consultation about their own business ideas and projects.

Currently, Anara’s group faces a different set of challenges. As indicated above, her products require an extended market and she continuously works to improve it. She has inquired into various possibilities including having regular retail outlet site in large bazaars in Bishkek. Anara has also attempted to negotiate agreements with local hospitals and military units for mattresses supply. High competition in Bishkek or corrupted systems of administration in the local institutions predicated success of these negotiations but that did not discourage Anara. “Our sales are slow and it irritates me and I will work out how to improve it”, she says. Marketing of felt is less problematic for Anara. It is an easier process because “farmers always need felt for yurts and floor carpets”. One small difficulty with the sales of felt is that it has seasonal features.

“When farmers begin preparations for dzhaillow, they call me asking if I have felt because they will soon go. If I call them earlier they say they don’t need it but in March and April they want it (laughing). This (she pointed to rolls of felt in the corner of the room. (Photo 7.)) I can only sell in the spring, not earlier”.

64
Like Nuria, Anara, too, encounters problems with the quality of the raw materials for her goods. The group purchases wool from the local farmers but the quality of it remains quite unsatisfactory (Photo 8.). “We buy one ton of the wool and only two or three hundred kg will be used. The rest we throw away or burn”, she complains.
There is also a more serious challenge that Anara still has to overcome. The workshops only operate six months per year from April to September. In the wintertime they lock the workshops and wait for the spring. This happens because the building does not have an in-built heating system. Electric radiators would be a solution in warmer parts of the country, but in Suusamyr Valley where winters are extremely cold, the buildings require serious heating. At the moment the premises do not provide for a furnace or boiler neither does it have hot water piles and a chimney. Anara’s responses make it clear that this situation is devastating for her. Winter is a good time for sewing because families return from high mountains meadows and women can spare more time for working in the workshops. In the summertime, in contrast, women’s time is often limited because they must travel to pasture lands together with their husbands. “If we had heating, we would work all year round”, says Anara. The problem with heating also contributes to a higher staff turnover. Anara has to regularly post job announcements to ensure that she has employees.
“I invite people from outside, from Naryn, Osh, etc. Both women and men come, work and live here. They want to stay longer time, but they cannot stay in this building because it is too cold to work and to live. So, they go away and each year I have to look for new people. Every summer I need to hire additional workforce because local women go to dzhaloo with their husbands.”

Despite all of these difficulties, Anara’s attitude is very positive. “We only work six month a year, but we always have an income, we always earn money”, she says. In the future she wants to involve more youth in her workshops. Her plans is to “have many trainees, many young people. We need to solve the problem of heating and water, of market our goods, and make more money for a higher turnover. I would invite even more women for a different kind of work, i.e., making of “beautiful things”, more refined handicrafts, folk souvenirs, embroidery, etc. This is important to save and pass old Kyrgyz traditions.”

Anara has already started working in this direction and organized a handiwork workshop for schoolchildren in the school. She teaches twenty five young girls the skills of “manual piala” (a special art of making woolen yarn). They needle or crochet clothes, hats, socks, scarves, etc. while Anara helps them to find a market.

Anara conveys a feeling of confidence that she will manage to achieve her goals. This strong woman knows how and where to raise funds for her workshops. She is aware of what works and what does not. She knows, for example, that the local government will not be helpful. “They [Ayil Okmotu] gave us the building and we don’t pay rent for it. This is already a big help. They can’t give more, they themselves are financially dependent upon subsidies”. However, she is on the lookout for a possibility to apply for grant. For this she says they “cooperate with many organizations including UNDP, with the Forum of Women’s NGOs and others”.

Case 3. Shair. Ornamental and Applied Arts

Shair is a well-known needlewoman who has been recognized for her talents well beyond her village. Since she was 35 years old she has been a widow raising four children. With a high school certificate for her formal education, Shair received an important informal training in sewing, embroidery and ornamental design from her mother and an uncle. As a result, from a very young age she was recognized for her astonishing skills in handicraft production and tailoring. This was fundamental not only for her development as a gifted artist but also for securing employment. For ten years she worked as a seamstress in Dom Byta (House of Repairs) and later became a teacher of arts and domestic skills for
girls in the local school where she worked for twenty years. Today she is a seventy four year old, retired and enjoys her status and community respect. “People used to respect me for my talents and they keep respecting me too”, she said.

Fifteen years ago a Mountain Village Development Project (TAO) initiated mobilization of local applied art groups and invited Shair to join it. She and her daughter-in-law agreed. This was where they learned how to make profit from their skills including calculating direct production costs. Shair’s daughter-in-law used to keep books and carefully register numbers to make sure they know what income they had. Since then Shair made shyrdaks and ala-kyizes for sale (Photo 9, 10, 11). The production of the carpets was very successful. The family never experienced shortages in demand. “Every year tourists come to purchase Shair’s made shyrdaks. We sell our shyrdaks abroad, we sell them to tourists. There is woman from Austria, she comes here every year and buys all the shyrdaks we have. In 2004 she bought one shyrdak and after five years she came back to buy more. If we had more, she would buy them all. But we don’t produce wholesale “

Successful production and associated income had an immediate positive impact on the wellbeing of the entire family. “Since we started earning more, it is so good. We support our three children who study in the universities in the city, we constructed a house. We were invited to participate in exhibitions, both in Suusamyr and in the city. Life changed for the better, of course.”
Photo 9. Shyrdaks made by Shair. Source: Kim, 2014

Photo 10. Ala-kyiz with embroidery made by Shair. Source: Kim, 2014
However, it seems highly likely that Shair’s production will gradually discontinue existing. In the last two years, the level of production decreased significantly. “Nobody now even keeps books and records the numbers to calculate incomes and cost prices”, says Shair. The decrease in production is attributed to her gradual withdrawal from the group activities. Due to her health conditions Shair cannot maintain the same level of productivity and must spend much more time in Bishkek, i.e., away from the production site.

Additionally, as Shair beckons, there is a lacking interest in national applied arts among the youth. “There are so many unemployed women and it is possible to train them and they would continue this tradition. Unfortunately, nobody is doing this anymore. It is a pity”. Younger women are discouraged from doing applied art because of the inherent necessity to process felt. Women seem to be especially reluctant to the idea of its manual production. They prefer a more technologically advanced process with the use of the machines and apprentices. In fact, lack of felt processing machinery partially caused disintegration of the local applied art group which Shair used to lead. When Shair was its leader the group used felt that her family members produced manually. “If only I were fifty years old now, I could work so much. Only now my health does not allow me to work more”, she said.

Shair’s productive activities, as well as those of Nuria and Anara seem to share one interesting feature, i.e., they evolved around one extraordinary person who can hardly be replaced. While the mere presence of local women-led activism and economic leadership is important by itself, in such a context longer-term sustainability of their projects remains at risk.

An important note to Shair’s case: financial standing of the family despite the decrease in the production did not suffer. The family became involved in community-based tourism where Shair’s contribution was essential but required less work. In fact, community-based tourism took precedence over applied art workshop because of its apparent privileges - it is a significantly less labor intensive and much more cost-efficient work. Shair plays an important but secondary role in this activity. Her daughter-in-law is in charge of this enterprise. A more detailed description is what follows.

Case 4. Community-based tourism
Nurzhamal is Shaiyr’s youngest daughter-in-law. She is in charge of hosting tourists in their house as part of a Community-based Tourism (CBT) program that operates in the village (Photo 12). Every year from
May to October Nurzhamal’s house welcomes its clients. They stay in a large one-story building where rooms are beautifully ornamented with photos, handicrafts, shirdaks and ala-kyizes which Shaiyr has made. In the off-season time, Nurzhamal’s family uses this house for family celebrations, visitors and other social gatherings. In the backyard the family sets up a large yurt where the clients dine and rest. The family itself lives in a smaller house located on the other side of the yard.

Photo 12. The office of local CBT organization. Source: Kim, 2014

Organizationally, Nurzhamal’s guesthouse is bound to the village’s CBT office. The latter attracts tourists and allocates them among local families who must sign up and queue to receive clients. Nurzhamal’s turn comes once or twice a week. Because tourists tend to come in groups, she typically hosts up to one hundred clients each season. For additional price Nurzhamal and her family also offer their guest a variety of entertaining services such as felt making workshops, cooking master-classes, kumis-making demonstrations and various performances.

“They [the tourists] often ask for “folk shows” (said in English). We do it together with the children. We dress up in Kyrgyz national costumes, sing and dance folk dances and play komuz. We also lend national costumes to our guests and sing and dance together with them”.

71
With all the fun activities that Nurzhamal’s guesthouse offers to its clients, she emphasizes her professional position toward this work. In order to increase the appeal of her house, she made considerable improvements in the building:

“We treat this very seriously. This is our job during the summer. I even installed shower and toilet inside the house, also running water, both hot and cold. I did it for my clients. When you have these conditions, tourists come to your house.”

CBT activity brings financial outcomes that make Nurzhamal very satisfied:

“Life has become much easier. We have telephone, washing machine, ovens and devices for baking bread, vacuum cleaners, refrigerator. We are becoming lazy (laughing). Lives of women are becoming much easier”.

Besides, there is a non-material component that makes her happy. Having never travelled abroad Nurzhamal has an exposure to international culture through communicating with her foreign guests:

“It is very good for us to have tourists in our house. On the one hand, it is additional money, on the other hand, it is so interesting, we speak to them, they bring us gifts. We even learnt some English and French. Our children also learnt how to make simple conversations in English. The other villagers like to practice saying “hello” in English. There used to be no such things as tourism in our village, there were no tourists here. Now we are used to them already and treat them well”

Advantages of her business significantly outweigh any challenges or additional workload for Nurzhamal. To my question about possible difficulties that her work involves she responded in the following way:

“I cook them breakfast, dinner and host them for the night. This is easy. We also have fun, sing, dance, kindle bonfires at night. Honestly, [she whispered] I would rather host thirty tourists than fifteen Kyrgyz people because it is much easier”.

It is apparent that the CBT-related work neither interferes nor burdens Nurzhamal. Only after the researcher’s second prompting she pointed to a lack of locally-grown vegetables which not only increases the prime costs of her business but also creates additional workload of ensuring pre-orders and timely delivery of vegetables from outside the village:

“We don’t grow and don’t grow enough. If anything grows here, it only ripens in the fall and not in the summer. Often when we need vegetables, local stores would not have them”.

72
Nurzhamal wants to promote her business and work directly with her clients without the intermediary services of the CBT office.

“We would like to host 15 people each day, we have the capacity and motivation for that. But CBT does not give us so many, only once or twice a week during the season. The season begins in May and finishes in October; some people also come in November but not to us”.

She understands that this would require independent marketing and advertising work: “We need our own pamphlet and distribute it in tourist agencies”, she said. But this work is, apparently, a challenge that this family has not sought a solution too.

In a more long-term perspective, Nurzhamal has an idea to construct a new cottage house near the river for her guesthouse. Apparently, such a location is more strategic because it reflects preferences of the clients.

“Many tourists do not like to stay at our house, they prefer those houses which are closer to the river. It is more beautiful there, they like walking along the river, do fishing there, etc. This is my dream, I don’t know how to actually do this. We can’t do it with our own financial means. If we had some external help for that, it would make it more realistic”.

With the researcher’s prompt Nurzhamal admitted that she would even consider taking a loan from the bank. No other sources appeared to her as realistic. For example, Nurzhamal immediately disqualified local government as a feasible option:

“God forbid if we ever have to depend upon their [Aiyol Okmotu] help. We’d better develop by ourselves”.


Nargiza is a 29-year-old woman living in small village in Suusamyr Aiyol Okmotu. She is a shy and reticent collocutor who gives short precise answers without much elaboration. Nargiza lives in a small house with her husband, four children (the youngest child is two years old and the oldest child is fourteen years old), and an elderly mother-in-law. Her husband is a full-time employee in a local school. At home taking care of children and attending to the elderly mother-in-law is entirely Nargiza’s job. Nargiza has never been officially employed. Shortly after she had finished high school she fell victim of bride abduction practice and was forced to marry the abductor. In the new family she was expected to help her mother-in-law who used to sell products from their domestic farm including milk, eggs, kurut (ball-
shaped dry young cheese), yogurt, ghee, etc. This woman taught Nargiza how to trade, calculate prices and seek clients. Gradually, Nargiza assumed full responsibility for this work. Today she runs a small home-based poultry and dairy farm. When this study was conducted she had five cows, few dozen hens and a few turkeys under her care.

It is clear that Nargiza’s activities are utterly essential for her family’s wellbeing. She remembers a period of time two years ago when she did not have any poultry:

“This was a difficult time. We did not even have eggs to feed the children. We could not afford to buy them. It was so difficult…”

Since then Nargiza makes sure that her small business is continuous and well-maintained. Today, her farm brings a considerable contribution to her family budget. To illustrate, each week she receives two thousands som for dairy products, two thousand some for selling whole turkeys and about five hundred som for selling eggs. This accounts to more than ten thousand som per month which is twice as much as her husband’s monthly salary.

Nargiza is markedly committed to her poultry project. It is evident that financial benefit is complemented with an increased feeling of self-worth. She seems to have used her economic activities as a compensation for her unrealized dreams and plans:

“I was an excellent student in high school. My parents and I were preparing for me to go to a university in Bishkek. After I got married they made my husband promise that he would allow me to study in the university. He told me to wait for one year. One year passed and I already had a baby and my parents-in-law started feeling sickly and I had to take care of them”.

Ultimately, Nargiza never went to the university. Today she finds opportunities for self-development and draws confidence from her independent economic activities.

“Now at least I am doing this work, making my own money. If I could go to the university now, I would go. But my husband does not support me. He says that education is no use to me. He says that even a teacher like him does not earn as much money as I already do without education”.

Adding to her developing sense of empowerment is her being in charge of making decisions about how to spend the earnings. Of course, most of the cash money she spends on her four children and household expenditures. But sometimes she also barters her products for the goods that she personally needs.

It is no surprise that Nargiza wants to scale up her homestead farming. Especially as she has observed a big demand for her products:
“Neighbors always ask for more eggs, I never have enough. Turkeys, too, will be gone by the New Year. Our people like turkey, especially in the winter. They will be asking for more, but I don’t have enough”.

Nargiza has a special interest in increasing production of turkeys because of their better sustainability to cold temperature. She wants to learn about effective technologies in turkey management in order to turn her micro-farm into a more “serious” production enterprise:

“Right now I have only six turkeys. I will sell them all way before the New Year. Next spring I will have to buy few little ones and they will grow until the next New Year. If I have two turkeys, they bring twenty younglings in a year. If I had forty I could sell 38 of them and leave two for the next year”.

However, Nargiza has little money for purchasing more poults. Indeed, her earnings are enough for immediate household expenditure but not for any larger investments. Additionally, the family has been constructing a new house which demands considerable expenses.

Also, an extended poultry farm would require her to hire at least one helper and she is not sure if she could afford it. Nargiza has been doing all the farm-related work by herself because her older children are at school while the younger ones are too little. Her husband treats her farm as a “women’s work” and neither interferes no helps her. In these conditions, Nargiza is left with an only option to keep her farming afloat and develop it at the rate and the speed that she can afford.

Analysis and conclusions

Five individual experiences reviewed here demonstrate diversity of processes whereby local rural women secure income through their own efforts. Analysis of interviews showed that women continually seek to improve their livelihoods by engaging in different productive activities which are available and appropriate in their existing situations. These women play a crucial role in supplementing family income. However, women’s income-generating activities often tend to add to women’s already busy workloads and risk to compromise on women’s time, energy and health.

The study shows that women-operated economic projects tend to be small-scale agriculture, manufacture, service and trade. It is evident that women possess adequate levels of knowledge and skills that determine success of their small enterprises. They obtain these skills and knowledge in different ways ranging from family upbringing and a “trial and error” approach to more systematic trainings provided by international organizations.

It is believed that living standard of the rural poor can only be uplifted when they receive income from the economic activities (AHMED et al., 2007). Empirical evidence from this study supports
this statement. Women report that their increased income improved at least four aspects of their livelihoods, i.e., food availability, freedom in cash expenditure, housing conditions and participation in social activities. No data were obtained on sanitation and health situation.

Women gain both positive economic and social benefits from their work. All of the interviews implicate a certain degree of empowerment obtained in the process of their economic participation. Four of the five women explicitly indicate that the overall quality of their lives has risen significantly. All of the respondents have developed an improved sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. Women’s productive activities are important for their personal self-realization. Increased social recognition and respect have been mentioned among other non-monetary benefits.

While economic initiatives empower women, the conditions in which they find themselves are often not optimal for success in terms of a more sustainable economic growth and independence. The interviewed women face a variety of multi-dimensional difficulties and constraints that affect their capacity to maintain and expand their productive activities. Common challenges for these women’s economic activities include lack of capital, insufficient infrastructural facilities, lack of improved technologies, poor marketing channel and, in one instance, relatively low skillfulness. There are also traditional socio-cultural constraints which limit women’s participation in larger-scale economic activities. In a situation where coordinating agencies that could support less visible economic activities are lacking, women who have a limited freedom of movement like Nargiza are barred from a better access to resources for improving their production.

Interviewees for the study were quite diverse but sufficient to express different aspects on their development with regard to their resource generation. Interestingly, none of the women has used financing options such as bank loans and micro-credits to start or maintain their activities. It has been mentioned once at a researcher’s prompt and only as a distantly possible solution. This, of course, rids them of the additional pressures related to outstanding credits and repayment schedules. However, some interviewees successfully used grant support offered by international organizations.

Indeed, the role of international organizations has been quite prominent in three of the reviewed women’s economic projects. These women indicate that they have received support in the way of trainings, funds, or services. Also, the earnings of these women appear to be higher than those who have not had access to international resources. Such difference might be attributed to the fact that the former received various additional skill development training on running small business, marketing, etc.
In conclusion, it is worth noting that rural women’s economic activities in Suusamyr empower them without largely disturbing the existing gender order. While they manage to successfully address their practical needs, strategic needs are only slightly attended. Nevertheless, all of the interviewed women have been breaking through traditional norms and coming forward to participate in more public economic activities. They do so in their own, often implicit, but locally appropriate ways.
Lesson Plan

Discussion – 15 minutes
The aim in this first part of the discussion is to become coming to grips with the topic and texts read. The discussion should start with sharing of the reflective pieces that the students just previously wrote.

During this time, the faculty member should provide students with questions that open up the conversation about methodology and methods broadly. During this period the faculty should also discuss with the class the readings, as these will be useful examples for an exploration of methodologies.

Activity – 45 minutes
The main part of the class this week should be dedicated to the activity. The activity is meant to be a pairs activity. In pairs, students should come up with the beginning components of a research proposal. This research proposal will be elaborated on throughout following weeks, so there is no need that they necessarily finish it this week.

The aim for students this week is to come up with the fundamentals of a research project – what, who, where, why, and then how. It is this final question – “how” – that refers to methods. The goal for this period is for them to come up with these fundamentals, and spend much of their time working through which method makes best sense for the project that they have chosen, given what it is they want to study; who or what they would want to study and what sorts of access issues this would include; and what is best way to get the required information to properly make a sustained and supported argument.

Concluding Discussion – 5-15 minutes
The concluding discussion should seek to bring together the work done during the Activity with the previous discussions. As part of this, the faculty member is strongly encouraged to bring discussions from previous class periods into conversation with the current topics. Through this, the aim is to start forming stronger connections between the topics over the entire period of the course.
Readings


Chapter 4. Mainstreaming Gender, Poverty, and the Environment

Photo 4: Janyzakova, Myrzabekova, and Kim
Introduction

The concept of gender mainstreaming is based on the recognition that gender-blind adaptation programmes are potentially harmful to development because they tend to exacerbate existing inequalities. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed in the Beijing Platform for Action from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 as a strategy for promoting gender equality. This strategy seeks to ensure that across the entire policy and issue spectrum (1) the analysis of issues and the formulation of policy options are informed by a consideration of gender differences and inequalities and (2) opportunities are sought to narrow gender gaps and support greater equality between women and men. The strategy of mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC agreed conclusions, 1997/2 as:

“... the process of assessing the implications for women and me of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”

Gender mainstreaming aims at transforming unequal social and institutional structures to make them responsive to gender and ensuring that both women and men benefit equally from the development process (UNDP, Gender, climate change and community based adaptation). It involves more than an approach commonly known as “add women and stir”, i.e., adding women to existing strategies and programmes. Special attention and action is sometimes required to fill the existing gaps and inequalities that women face.

In relation to integrating gender into environmental programs, gender mainstreaming within the international policy framework for climate change (UNFCCC), is mandated by a decision on “Mainstreaming Gender into Climate Change Regime”, made by the Women’s Caucus at COP-10 in Buenos Aires (2004). This decision was supported by the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNDEP) Women’s Assembly in Nariobi in 2004 (Roer et al, 2004). These decisions envisioned steps for the preparation and implementation of NAPAs and CBA projects:

- Analyze the effects of climate change from both male and female perspectives
- Develop and apply gender-sensitive criteria and indicators
• Include statistics on women as well as on men when collecting and presenting data
• Capitalize on the talents and contributions of both women and men
• Set targets for female participation in activities
• Make women’s equality, access to information, economic resource and education a priority
• Ensure that women are represented in 50% of all decision-making processes
• Incorporate a gender perspective when designing and implementing projects
• Focus on gender differences and capabilities to cope with climate change adaptation and mitigation
• Undertake a gender analysis of all budget lines and financial instruments

Gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programs require gender-sensitive approach in all phases of the project cycle: planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A key tool to enable this is gender analysis.

Gender analysis is a tool used to address gender dimensions of any given issue or intervention to mainstream gender (UNDP, 2007). It has an objective to identify empirical evidence (quantitative and qualitative) for gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities for men and women. There are a number of analytical tools that can be used for gender mainstreaming. Below is a UNDP publication “Gender, Climate change and community-based adaptation. A guidebook for designing and implementing gender-sensitive community-based adaptation programmes and projects”.

Implementation of mainstreaming strategies will be different depending on the activities such as research, policy development, policy analysis, programme delivery or technical assistance. The processes and opportunities are different for each area of work. Additionally, mainstreaming strategy must be adapted to the particular subject matter. There seems to be no agreement as to how best do gender mainstreaming as long as it goes beyond “adding women and stirring”. However, the practice has attracted a large body of criticism as the term allows for lots of flexibility and confusion arising from it. Oana Crusmac discusses popular discourse on gender mainstreaming’s goals and presents various criticism of the term as unclear, debatable and limiting, consequently, leading to perpetuation of masculine paradigm. More weaknesses of this strategies are discussed in the article.

At the same time, poverty-environment mainstreaming is believed to contribute to poverty eradication and achievement of other development goals through sustainable use of natural resources. This can be done through integrating poverty-environment objectives into mainstream economic decision-making processes, particularly national and subnational planning and budgeting processes led
by ministries of planning, finance, economy, relevant sectors and local government. Through mainstreaming central parts of government that determine public expenditures may become engaged with sustainable development. Poverty – environment mainstreaming provides channels for development priorities to be achieved sustainably, efficiently, and cost-effectively. However, mainstreaming is complex, demanding and multifaceted. Challenges to successful mainstreaming include a so-called “mainstreaming fatigue” because of the large array of issues which already demand attention. Also, treating environment as a cross-cutting issue can sometimes deem it invisible compared to sector-specific approach and more affirmative action. There is a political economy of mainstreaming which makes it a hard work without direct implementation through stand-alone environmental plans, especially in structures which lack transparency and accountability. The PEI’s chapter on “Importance of Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Concerns” discusses those in detail.
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

The vignettes for this week can be found in the back of the handbook in the readings. You can find them prior to the readings in the Supplementary section. The first document is titled ‘Reviewing environmental financing policy and expenditure in the Kyrgyz Republic’, and is a preliminary report published by UNDP-UNEP PEI in August 2017. The second document is Sustainable Development in Kyrgyzstan: Regional Aspect by the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The third document is titled ‘Gender-Environment Mainstreaming in Tajikistan’ by Henrieta Martonakova and Zumrad Kataeva.
Lesson Plan

**Video & Reflection – 10-15 minutes**

Rather than beginning with the readings, this week the faculty should screen the short (3 minute) film related to Nike’s ‘The Girl Effect’. You can find the video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg)

Prior to showing the students the video the faculty should instruct them to note down what images of gender they see, and what the broad picture is throughout the video. They should also think through how poverty is addressed.

**Activity – 25-30 minutes**

Building off of the discussion from the readings, case study, and Nike video, the aim of this week’s exercise is to have the students begin coming up with a short presentation on gender mainstreaming. Depending on class size, students should be broken down into groups between 2 and 4. To do the presentation they should look at the ways that one of the topics (gender, poverty, or environment) is mainstreamed into development thinking and projects, finding a case study for this. Then, from there, they need to work to make suggestions about how the project could more fully integrate the component that they were looking at (gender, poverty, or environment).

**Presentations**

Each group will present on the case that they found. They should discuss the shortcomings of the current way the project integrates the particular aspect; and then present the suggestions they have for ways to improve the integration into the projects.
Readings


UNDP (2017a) *Reviewing environmental financing policy and expenditure in the Kyrgyz Republic*. Bishkek: UNDP.
Chapter 5. From WID to GAD

*Photo 5: Janyzakova, Myrzabekova, and Kim*
Introduction

A thorough understanding and appreciation of both women and men in the development process is required for successful development. How women and gender issues have been integrated to international development has a history. The theory of gender and development was originally grew from a feminist response and a critique of modernization theory. They argued that women had not benefited from development strategies in the same ways as men. Main trends in the way women’s issues have been conceptualized in the context of development over the past few decades are discussed in this chapter. We begin with a discussion of the early WID (Women in Development) approach. This approach was based on a combined argument for equity and economic efficiency. WID-proponents made emphasis on women’s productive contributions and hoped that this argument would help direct economic resources to women. WID made women seen and relevant to the concerns of development planners and policy makers, but the strategy entailed a controversial implication which prioritized what development needs from women over what women need from development.

The term “women in development” was coined in 1970s by a women’s network of professionals in Washington who questioned the theories of development, in particular, its “trickle down” approach. Women’s circles in the United States lobbied Congressional hearings which resulted in the 1973 Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act. According to this Act, integrating women “into the national economics of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort” was required in any assistance granted by the United States. They argued that modernization impacted women and men differently and deteriorated women’s position. At the same time Danish economist Ester Boserup’s book “Women’s role in Economic Development” (1970) highlighted women’s importance to economy, agricultural economy. WID advocates drew on Boserup’s research to reject the view on women as limited to their role as mothers and wives characteristic of development policy concerning women. In 1974 USAID established and office for Women in Development wherein researchers and practitioners in the universities, research institutions and foundations worked together. At part of this movement, the United Nations declared the years 1975-1985 to be the United Nations Decade for Women. After 1975’s International Women’s Year Conference in Mexico, the UN established UNIFEM (The United Nations Development Fund for Women). The central idea of the WID movement was to bring women full force into development process. As a result nearly every development organization established programs to improve position of women.
Instead of seeing women as beneficiaries in need of health or social welfare, WID positions women as active and productive society members and therefore should be brought into the market. WID resulted in donor support for small-scale income-generating activities for women aimed at helping poor women to contribute to family needs and producing more income. But these interventions tended to focus on women’s skills in nutrition or handicraft that doing little to actually overcoming poor women’s marginalization. This approach suffered the limitation of treating women as a homogenous group. Marxist critique of this showed that women have always been part of the development process, but structural differences within society worked to disadvantage women. Such a paradigm, called “women and development’ treated women as economic actors and advocated their inclusion in development.

Policy discourse shifted to GAD (Gender and Development) which put focus on the interrelations between women and men rather than on women only. The origins of GAD lie with the work of the women working in the mid-1970s in the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex in the UK. These interrelations challenged the assumption of togetherness of husbands and wives in households. The proposition was that the interrelations between women and men have both cooperative and conflictual dimensions that must be taken into consideration for a ‘gender-aware’ approach to development. Questioning the adequacy of focusing on women in isolation led to more thorough exploration of the relational nature of their subordination. GAD argued that more value needed to be put on the tasks done by women within the system of sexual division of labor. GAD also made it visible that women were not a homogenous group but divided by class, race, geographies, etc. GAD provided an approach in which gender was looked at as interrelated with the overall socially created hierarchies with an awareness of culturally specific forms of inequality and divisions. GAD was seen as opening doors for women as social actors and opened new strategies for feminist intervention through identifying key weaknesses in official policies for strategic intervention. GAD, nevertheless, received a continued criticism that it did not get rid of its modernist tendencies and continued essentializing poor women.
Women and environment in the Kyrgyz Republic Photo story
2015 United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environmental Programme, Global Environment Facility, American University of Central Asia
Text by Elena Kim

The views expressed in this training manual are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including its Members States and the United Nations Development Programme

Photos by Aiperi Janyzakova, Asel Myrzabekova, Elena Kim (unless indicated otherwise)
For ethical reasons all of the informants in this report are disguised under pseudonyms.
All of photos were taken with the permission of participants. Participants’ consent was obtained for their images and photos to be used in printed materials and visual media.
Description

This photo story is based on a study conducted by faculty and students of the American University of Central Asia in 2015 with funding from Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). PEI is a global UN effort that supports country-led efforts to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national development planning. PEI provides financial and technical assistance to government partners to set up institutional and capacity-strengthening programmes and carry out activities to address the particular poverty-environment context.

In the Kyrgyz Republic more than 65 percent of people live in rural areas (World Bank Indicators, 2010). The overall poverty rate today is 40.8% whereas 9.4% of the rural population lives in extreme poverty (Rural Development Fund, 2014). Among the rural poor, women tend to be more vulnerable to poverty and deprivation. Fifty three percent of rural households which are headed by women are classified as poor, 15% of them live in extreme poverty (Rural Poverty Portal, 2014). Rural women tend to have insufficient quality of basic service delivery and are more inclined to unemployment than men. When employed, women’s labor is paid less than men. They rarely take equitable part in decision making in the public spheres. Today, rural women represent only 6% of members of pasture management committees (UNDP, 2014), 18% of Water Users Associations, 13.6% of local councils and 4.65% heads of local self-governments. At home rural women spend considerably more time on maintaining their households and childcare than men. At the same time they experience a limited access to natural and economic resources and are less likely to own land and property such as livestock and agricultural machinery. While women constitute the majority of labour force in agriculture, their contributions to economy and household activities are largely not accounted for.

A study called “Gender, Poverty and Environment in Rural Kyrgyzstan: Issues of Natural Resource Management, Biodiversity Loss and Effects of Environmental Degradation on the Rural Poor” comprised an important part of a larger PEI funded project called “Increasing Awareness on Gender through the Prisms of Poverty-Environment and Biodiversity”. Part of the study’s methodology focused on collection of qualitative data which illustrate real stories from rural women illustrating their roles in and contribution to agriculture, their capacities and knowledge as well as challenges they experience and needs they have.
Aikokul: Making income by growing potatoes

Aikokul is a married woman in her mid-thirties raising six children. She begins her story with the phrase “we don’t work and receive state benefits for all of five children”, but what follows in her description of life clearly demonstrates how hard, in fact, this woman works to sustain her and her family’s livelihoods. For the last fifteen years she has been a small farmer doing a variety of activities to generate income. She is, like most of the women in the village, a very accurate planner of expenditures with a high degree of reliance on consistency of the productivity of her assets. One plot of Aikokul’s land is a 0.15 ha garden with twenty apple trees and twenty apricot trees of different varieties. A large portion of cash income comes from selling of apricot harvest. This money has a direct function in Aikokul’s family: “In the summer we sell our apricots. This money we use to pay the shepherds who herd our animals in ‘dzhailoos’ (the distant pasture lands) and to buy the fodder”. Petty cash generated from selling milk from her cows Aikokul uses for everyday expenses like food and other necessities for her children. Aside from that she complement family meals with what she grows in her kitchen garden, i.e., cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage, carrots, radishes, onions, garlic, etc. The income the family receives from selling their apples in the fall is used for purchasing warm clothes for their children.

Aikokul’s set of responsibilities extends to potatoes’ growing. It is her sole job in the family. She complains that the price for potatoes is too low, nevertheless, actively continues its cultivation on a field of 0.20 ha. She is the one in the family who opens the ground, plants potatoes, and weeds it. If the family has money they use services of a machine to harvest it, they do. Otherwise, she does it manually. It is her responsibility to make sure that the land is fertilized. She uses organic fertilizers like manure although, her preference is to use mineral fertilizers which she simply cannot afford. There is an apparent well-set mechanism of supply of the insecticides mostly against the so-called ‘Colorado beetle’ (Leptinotarsa decemlineata) as suppliers arrive into the village and barter their insecticides for potatoes. Aikokul has been using this mechanism for years already. This year her hard work was generously rewarded and she collected three tons of select potatoes. However, her job does not stop after her harvest is collected. She then must separate her harvest into three categories, i.e., for sale, for seeds and for consumption: “I pick the biggest potatoes and take them aside for sale. The smallest ones I keep for next year’s sowing. All ‘defective’ ones I leave at home. We will eat them ourselves”. Aikokul then packs her crops into net bags and stores them in her cellar. “I know how to do this all from childhood. As
a little girl I was doing it with my family. My family grew potatoes, and also garlic. And now I am doing it myself for my children”, she says.

Gulchekhra: Selection and collection of seeds

Gulchekhra is a 66-year-old retired woman living in a village in Issyk-Kul oblast (one of the seven provinces in the Kyrgyz Republic). She has a university degree from Leningrad Technical Institute and worked in Bishkek for most of her life. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 she and her husband returned to the village to become farmers. Today the family owns ten hectares of agricultural land where they cultivate wheat, potatoes, and oats. Gulyaim’s responsibly is to ensure high quality of seeds.

I always work with my own seeds. I select, collect and save them. I can see it which seeds are the best. You just see them. All the seeds I test before sowing. I put seeds into humate. Humate is an organic fertilizer. It is harmless. So, I soak the seeds in this humate for 2-3 days and then plant about twenty seeds on a piece of cloth and put them on my windowsill on a sunny side. I see how
many of them germinate. If seventeen seeds out of 20 grow, I view it as a good result. After that I can distribute seeds to the people. Then my conscientiousness is clean, that I give good seeds to the people. The quality of seeds is the priority. Yes, people come to me to get seeds for wheat, oats, sainfoin.

Indeed, through traditional process of seed selection, women all over the world engage in choosing certain desirable plant characteristics and decide on the quantity and variety to be saved as well as the method of preservation. The moment that the crops begin to flower, women begin observing the plants, and later harvest seeds based on their size, grain formation and resistance to pests and insects.

Photo 7: Gulchekhra demonstrates her harvest of pears in her garden

Bekzada: Women’s small-scale farming provides a core source of subsistence

Bekzada is a retired woman living a rural area in the southern shore of Issyk-kul lake. Her kitchen garden produces vegetables in quantities sufficient enough to feed the entire family all year round. Bekzada’s poultry provides her family with eggs and meat. This type of farming has important implications for the family budget. Bekzada’s regular source of income is her pension of seven thousand som (the currency of the Kyrgyz Republic; as of November 2017 $1 USD equals 70 som).
“I grow everything in my kitchen garden. My kitchen garden is my own kingdom. I know everything about it, where and what. I have garlic, beetroots, radishes, carrots, potatoes, wheat. I have apples, apricots, pears. When I harvest garlic, I plant radishes on the same spot. So, the day before yesterday I collected all radishes. I also grow cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage. Everything grows in our garden, it is all ours. I only buy what? (she paused), sunflower oil and sugar. The rest is ours, we bake bread ourselves. We make our own pasta of any type. We also have hens, so we don’t buy eggs. After each January we will eat chicken, turkey, etc. Meat in general is our own too.

All you have to do is make efforts, make efforts and work with your head. Then everything becomes possible. You can have everything of your own, you can plant anything here, it will grow”.

Photo 8: Food supplies produced by women’s everyday activities

Burul: Breeding poultry with traditional knowledge
Globally women farmers have been largely responsible for the improvement and adaptation of many varieties of plants, animals and poultry. Around the world, women usually oversee small household livestock. They choose and breed for preferred traits based. In south-east Mexico, women keep as many as nine breeds of local hens, as well as local breeds of turkey, ducks and broilers in. In selecting the best breeds, they consider 11 separate characteristics and can easily distinguish the breeds and species based on each of these. Current research identified similar activities in rural Kyrgyzstan where nearly every household has some poultry. Burul is a member of one of such households and she agreed to share some of her knowledge in this research:

“Women in the village know how to treat poultry, how to receive better breeds and how to feed them. In the spring, for example, one must feed them one type of food in order to increase egg production. You must feed them something different to make sure that hens begin to incubate. In the spring I feed them with yeast-containing food to make them start incubating. I select the best eggs and put them under the hens. An odd number is better. You need 1 rooster per 10 hens. I personally pick the roosters, the largest ones and the most beautiful ones, they are the most slightly, the most combative. You must know when to slaughter. For example, it is better to slaughter them in January”.

Photo 9: Burul demonstrating high quality eggs
Using biodiversity

One of the research locales was a village in Issyk-kul oblast. Inhabitants use biodiversity for a variety of purposes including food, medication, firewood and recreation. Below are some quotes:

Gulyaim, 66-year-old, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“Barbary grows very close to us near the lake, sea berries as well. We collect and eat them. It is both food and medicine. Medicinal herbs also grow here. I collect herbs, dry them and store them and we use them during the winter time. I treat cough with these herbs, I also use the for steam baths. Among the herbs are milfoil, taraxacum, rowanberries, and others”.

Gulnara, 52-year-old, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“We collect black currants, sea berries for jam. I also collects medicinal herbs against allergies, diarrhea, etc. Altogether there are 4-5 types of herbs that I use every time”.

Taailai, 20-year-old, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“I collect brushwood to make fire. My mother and younger sister collect sea berries and black currant for jam. Brushwood is collected by men, berries are collected by women, older and younger”.

Dzhamilia, 29-year-old, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“Here we go to swim in the lake; in the forest we collect barberry to make jam, juice and medicine. We, the village women, like to go for walks into the forests”. 
Using biodiversity: Medicinal herbs for traditional healing in Kyrgyzstan

Malika has been a school teacher in a local village in Issyk-Kul oblast for twenty five years. Since her husband died ten years ago she has been questioning modern medicine and gradually became a local traditional healer. For the last four years Malika has been collecting wild growing herbs for medicinal purposes. For her this is also generational knowledge and skills which she learnt from her mother and her mother learnt from her own mother. For the last six years, Malika makes long trips to a place high in the mountains. She travels eight hours by car to reach a small village and takes a horse to go further into the wild. She spends a week at a specific spot and picks the herbs she needs. Among her favorite plants are Rhodiola or golden root, Staghorn ferns or platycerium, and others that Malika does not know the names of. She knows their qualities from her mother and grandmother and knows how to use them. There are five types of most important varieties she collects and she is happy with their effectiveness. “These five are enough to help a person with an illness. One must be aware that herbs can also be harmful for you. And I must say that herbs do not always help”, she says. It is imperative for Malika to know that her herbs come from a specific place because she believes that they are totally different from
those grown elsewhere. Their effect is also much stronger. She tried to plant her favorite herbs in her own garden but “it was useless because the plants’ qualities were different, they were not effective as those which grow in the mountains. The climate, the soil, the air is different there”.

Today Malika enjoys social respect and people’s gratitude to her. She is now known for having successfully treated such diseases as ulcer, cyst, myoma, helminthes, prostatitis, cystitis, infertility, etc. Her knowledge of medicinal herbs also helps to raise some income although she does not generally charge money for her services.

Using biodiversity: Collecting wild-growing sea berries in Issyk-Kul
The shoreline of Issyk-Kul is known for its richness of wild sea buckthorn shrubs. The shrubs grow naturally in cold areas and have a high resistance to frost. It is also highly resistant to insect damage, and most animals avoid eating it. In Issyk-Kul, sea buckthorn shrubs play an important role in ecosystem protection because they prevent soil erosion and also build the capacity of the lake to clean itself. Sea buckthorn is now included into the Red Book and is protected by the legislation against felling. The plant
also serves as an economic resource for food and medicine products. The berries are rich in vitamins E, B1, B2, anti-oxidants and over 100 healthful constituents making them one of the most nutritious berries on earth. The leaves are also being used for beverages due to essential fatty acids they contain. The fruit pulps are used for subsistence in jams, jellies, sauces, etc. The oils of seeds are used for medicinal purposes. The oil from the seeds is used to treat a variety of skin diseases and injuries. Cosmonauts use it for radiation burns.

Many of the villagers use sea buckthorn for income and food. One of its residents is Saida, a middle-aged woman who raises three children with her husband in their small house. Saida works as a seller in a local hardware store. Her salary is the main and only regular source of income of the entire family. Her husband is responsible for any work related to their garden where they grow apples, pears and apricots for sale. At home they have some hens, ducks, sheep and cows. Eggs, milk and poultry they use for their own subsistence only. Having arrived to the village fifteen years ago for permanent living with her husband, Saida found herself with no job and a sufficient cash income to support her family. At this time the idea of using buckthorn came. Since 2005 she has been regularly organizing her family’s trip to mountains where they collect sea buckthorn berries.

“Together with my husband and children with go far up to the mountains. We walk by foot if nobody gives us a ride. We cut branches and with ripe berries and bring them down here. I then strip the branches of berries by hand at home or at work when I don’t have customers”

On average Saida and her family collects about one hundred kilograms of sea buckthorn berries over a period from mid-summer till November. This brings Saida cash income of more than ten thousand som per year. “This is my personal money”, she says. However, later mentions that she spends this money on children and house needs. “I buy warm clothes for my children, and also coal and firewood to heat our house in the winter time.”

Saida and her family, and many other families in her village, undoubtedly receive economic and subsistence benefits from what the nature offers them. However, she has been observing changes in the availability and quality of the berries over the years. “The quantity of berries has been changing every year, there are less and less bushes. The berries themselves are now smaller”.


Using biodiversity: Wild – growing mushrooms

Kalima became a mushroom collector when she was still in her eight grade of school. Every summer she and her father make long trips high in the mountains and stay there for about one month living in tents and collecting mushrooms. Mostly this would be milk mushrooms and squirrels. She and her father bring their sacks full of mushrooms to their tents where they clean, boil and pickle them. After that they pack them up in sacks. The family then would transport some mushrooms to a market in the nearest city of Cholpon Ata where relatives help them with selling. This would typically be a middleman who pays 200 som per one kilo. Kalima knows that middlemen take mushrooms further to Kazakhstan and sell them there. Sometimes, they hold some of mushrooms for later because the prices grow towards the winter. For Kalima, gathering mushrooms is difficult. One must wake up at 5 am, stock up on snacks and climb up and down the entire day. The income they would receive ranged from 10 000 to 15 000 som per season, but Kalima never participated in deciding how to spend those. Mostly, the money was spent on food.
Women walnut collectors in Arstanbap, Batken oblast

Rahat Sabyrbekov, a faculty member from the American University of Central Asia, delivered a research report at the Regional Central Asian Conference on “Gender equality and sustainable development for transformative change” held in Bishkek in November 2015.

He emphasized women’s role in walnut collection and processing for economic wellbeing of their families.
Vulnerability: Dependence on cropped agriculture

Vulnerability to climate change and biodiversity loss is often tangible upon people’s dependence on natural resources. Rural people’s livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan are heavily reliant on cropped agriculture. What they grow in the fields, in their kitchen gardens and other plots of land, the animals and poultry they breed provide these people with income and subsistence. Below is a story of a typical family living in a village located in the southern shore of Issyk-Kul lake. Although this family does not use any wild growing plants their dependence upon natural resources is more than evident. As one of the respondents, Dzhamilia, says: “There are no jobs in the village. We make our living by our kitchen gardens, trees gardens and animals we breed. We have apricots and apples, we grow potatoes and barley. Any excess we sell, but mostly we eat what we grow”. Below is another story about Tazagul, a villager, whose livelihood is fully dependent upon cropped agriculture.

Tazagul is in her late twenties. She is unemployed and raises her six small children together with her husband who is also officially jobless. The family owns some sheep, cattle and poultry and Tazagul takes full responsibility for cows and poultry, all the products are used for family consumption only. Tazagul uses her small kitchen garden and also rents a larger plot of land further away from her house to grow potatoes for her family and also for sale. Once she cleans her land of potatoes she plants garlic there which she later sells.
Cash income in Tazagul’s family comes from her husband’s work as a middle man. He purchases apples within the village and transports them for sale elsewhere. This income is used for a small construction that the family recently started to enlarge their home in order to accommodate all six children. The family also receives income from trading apricots in midsummer. However, this money is typically used for purchasing feed for the sheep and cattle and also a. The cattle is important for the family because they provide milk and dairy, an important component of local diet. Sheep they use for their own consumption as well. “We eat out sheep. Only in exceptional cases we turn to selling the sheep. The price is too low nowadays”, she says. The family receives no state benefits for their children because they are not considered eligible due to their ownership of sheep and a car. So, together with her mother-in-law who receives a pension they do their best to educate and provide for their children. “If you don’t do all of this, you can’t really rear children”, she says.
Vulnerability: Market chain disruption

Zhipar is a former school teacher with a university degree in history. She is now a retired woman with five grown-up children and two grandchildren who live permanently with her and her husband. She has a garden with apple, apricot and pear trees and a kitchen garden where she grows vegetables such as cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, beetroots, and potatoes. Zhipar cans many of her vegetables for winter and cook them for immediate eating. She says

“Our kitchen garden is enough for us. We don’t have to buy anything, but we don’t’ sell anything either. We eat everything from our kitchen garden ourselves, because there are small grandchildren and we also send vegetables to our adult children in Bishkek. There is no point in selling potatoes, for example, because it is too cheap. But we used to sell it before”.

Zhipar notes the importance of apricot growing to her family income. She says: “In the summertime we grow apricots. What we earn from selling apricots is enough for us to survive in the winter. I can say that we live by apricots. For the last ten-fifteen years apricots were the main source of income”.

Zhipar and her husband do everything to ensure productivity of their apricot trees. They use organic fertilizers (manure) and mineral fertilizers (saltpeter) and insecticides. They whitewash every tree to prevent ants and other insects, prune branches and prey. “We pray and ask for good weather, no hail, no storms”, she says with a smile.

It became evident that households like Zhipar’s have a very limited access to larger markets to sell their products and, in general, face challenges in all sections of value chains. They, therefore, receive only a small fraction of the ultimate value of their outputs. With a lack of access to alternative and larger markets, Zhipar, along with many other families in the village, use only one marketing channel such as intermediary purchasers. The latter arrive into the village (in heavy trucks) at specific time of the season and purchase all available products from the villagers. This marketing schema has been long established and generally satisfies the local farmers. However, heavy reliance upon it has a high propensity to lack reliability. This is what happened in this part of the village during the current year. Zhipar tells her story as follows:

“This year we had a big problem. The trucks arrived to our village too late when apricots became overripe. We could not sell all of our apricots. So we had to buy glass jars, make juice and can it for us to drink in the winter. We made forty jars (hundred and twenty liters). Of course, this juice is good for the small children, much better than Coca-Cola or Fanta. But we lost half of our income. We will have to sell our sheep in the winter time this year.”
Aida: Preserving biodiversity with traditional knowledge

Aida is a 56-year-old former teacher of Biology and Chemistry in a village located in Dzhumgal Aiyl Okmotu (Village administration. Also, an administrative and territorial unit). In mid-summer 2015 Aida started on her own home-based business. Using traditional recipes, her local knowledge and innovative thinking she produces Kyrgyz national food and snacks. Especially striking is the variety of kurut (Ball-shaped dry young cheese) that Aida makes. More than twenty different types of kurut combine classic traditional recipe and original flavors and natural additives. To illustrate, among Aida’s new flavors are kurut with sea berries, with beetroots, with black currant, with raspberries, with strawberries, with horsemeat, with butter, with dill, with dried plums, etc. Aida calls her innovative kuruts “vitaminized kuruts” and keeps records (which she calls “referats”) to collects the receipts. She describes each type of kurut in terms of their content (calcium, types of vitamins, etc). In innovating and searching for even more recipes she often makes use of the book called “Medical herbs of Kyrgyzstan” by Altymyshbaeva.

Besides kurut Aida makes “chobogo”, “gulazyk”, “ui kymyz”, “koshkon mai”, “talkan” and other national food which are slowly losing their popularity. Again, combining traditional recipes and new ideas is something that characterizes Aida. For instance, she adds honey, dried grapes and nuts to ghee (‘sary mai’) to produce a new type of desert.

“Milk is very cheap today. I saw that many people throw away lots of milk and dairies. I did not like it. I know how to use it and I also teach other young women how to put milk to a good use. Milk is very cheap to sell, but kurut keeps good price”.

Aida’s neighbors regularly buy kurut from her when they go for visits outside of the village. Her daughters help her market her kurut in Bishkek. She also started on-line sale of her products with the help of her younger daughter. Recently, she managed to sell six kilos of kurut to Muchnen, Germany.
Vulnerability: Susceptibility to climate change

Aziza works as a school teacher in a village known as a ‘capital of apricots’. Her family’s main source of income comes from selling of apricots they grow in their garden. The money they receive is sufficient to provide for the entire family. However, there has been a noticeable decrease in the amount of fruits they were able to collect this year, which Aziza attributes to the consequences of climate change.

“This year we had a poor harvest [of apricots]. This year we had problems, either late frosts (in May 2015) or a poor cross-pollination. I have lost income. Earlier, we used to earn from 150 to 200 thousand som per season. This year we only earned eighty thousand som. We also collected fewer apples this year. Last years it was much better. But we can’t control the weather. We can’t stop hail or late frosts”.

The failure of receiving the expected income forced the family to use their reserve capital and livestock. Because we made less money on apricots, we had to sell part of our sheep herd. We sold some sheep, because we had to pay the ‘contract’ (university tuition fee for their three children).
The family wanted to compensate for the losses by planting more potatoes, but they did not have enough land for that. However, next year Aziza and her husband will rent a larger piece of land to grow more potatoes in order to balance off potential loss of income from trading their apricots. This is a rational solution for the family, however, it carries a risk of increasing the workload for Aziza due to the fact that traditionally, potatoes-related work has been her responsibility. “I am responsible for planting and harvesting [of potatoes], and, of course, weeding”, she says. At the moment Aziza uses 0.5 ha to cultivate potatoes. If the family increases the size of the plot, the amount of additional work will fall heavily on her already busy life. “All of this I do after I finish teaching because you, as a teacher, cannot miss classes”, Aziza tells in an interview. It must be taken into account that Aziza has a kitchen garden where she grows vegetables and also take care of two parents-in-law one of whom has been paralyzed for the last four years and Aziza was a primary caregiver for her. “Life of a village woman is difficult. From early morning we have to work to put our lives together”, she says. Given the fact that the climate change will accelerate, there is a concern that losses to its consequences will be paid by women’s increased labour, time and health.
Challenges: Access to technologies

Tazagul, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“Among the hardest difficulties is lack of equipment. Tractors are in private property and the owners charge fee for their services. Farmers also must pay additionally for fuel. Getting a tractors is a special difficulty because one needs to queue up in order to buy the service”.

Zhipar, Issyk-Kul oblast:

“I do everything manually. I don’t have the technologies. I must use hoe to cultivate potatoes, dig with a spade. I use combine to collect potatoes, but we only have one combine in the entire village. There are only few tractors to cultivate the land. Even so, I don’t have enough money to afford paying for the services of a tractor. Everything depends on money. If you have good money, you can pay for tractor and combine and receive good harvest”.

Meerim, Naryn oblast:

“I have no equipment; the private service is very expensive. You can’t find a tractor in the spring. If you find one you must chase him and pursuage him to take your order earlier. You have to be good to him, buy him cigarettes, etc. All this in addition to the fees he charges. Also, you must find, buy and bring him the diesel, too”.

Nazima, Naryn oblast:

“I must pay 1200 som and buy 25 litres of fuel per hectare. For the tractor I must also pay 1400 som. Even if I have the money, I must fight in too many conflicts over who gets to be serviced first. I you need to lure the tractor-driver with cigarettes, cook food for him, cajole him with beer, etc.”
Challenges: Access to water

Zhumagul, Issyk-Kul oblast:

_We have problems with irrigation water. We can only irrigate once a month only. The trees [apricots and apple] need to be watered at least three times per month. The water is too far from us, it takes time for it to come down from the mountains. The queue is too long of us to wait. The water from the well cannot be used for irrigation because it contains chlorine._

Zhipar, Issyk-Kul oblast:

_We depend upon mountains on irrigation water. I event used to steal water from my neighbours. Sometimes it does not come at all. This year I missed my turn to water my wheat field ... So, instead of 70 bags I only received 40._

Asel, Naryn oblast:
There is no use for us even to try to plant fruits because we don’t have water for irrigating the fields. I can’t cultivate many vegetables because there is no water...

Aina, Naryn oblast:

Every year I receive 17 tons of potatoes from 70 sotkas [0.7 ha] every year. I used to grow barley and hey in this field. What we grow is enough, but the problem is water. There is no water at all.

University students raise their voices to speak about poverty, environment and gender

In Fall 2015 students from different institutions of higher education took part in an essay contest on their understanding of the relationship between the issues of poverty, environment and gender equality in Central Asia. The best papers were selected for presentation at the Regional Central Asian Conference on “Gender equality and sustainable development for transformative change” held in Bishkek in November 2015. Below are some quotations from the winning essays:
Asel Kaldybaeva, student:

Getting out of poverty trap happens at an environmental expense in Kyrgyzstan. But women in agriculture can influence decisions for preserving environmental sustainability in Kyrgyzstan. Women can invest in long-term sustainability of environment and wellbeing of people if they become in charge of agricultural work. They can prevent excessive usage of chemicals in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, with proper knowledge women can pass it on to next generations and think globally while acting locally.

Dzamila Aitakunova

Today in Kyrgyzstan there is not yet the understanding of the importance of gender equality when addressing the issues of environmental degradation and poverty reduction, especially within gender-environment-poverty/development nexus. The country’s population does not yet possess environmental consciousness and does not fully estimate the negative consequences of environmental degradation. Unfortunately, people cannot be thinking of environment carefully, while striving to survive economically. The situation gets even worse with the similar position of the state. The necessary and important step that should be undertaken at all levels starting from household up to the community, national and global level is to support women’s equal voice in taking responses towards climate change. In the process of policy development, women should be taken into account not only as policy targets, but also as important agents of development and implementation of policy.
Lesson Plan

**Reflective Writing – 10 minutes**

Writing prompts should address the main components, arguments, or examples from the case and the reading. The goal of this writing is twofold. Firstly, it is to allow each student some time to process the topic through writing, in a minimally directed fashion. Secondly, it is to allow the students the opportunity to gain valuable practice writing. These pieces are ungraded and are meant solely for the student’s benefit rather than assessment.

The faculty member should prepare the question beforehand. Some possible questions that could be used are:

- What is the main takeaway for you from these pieces?
- How does the case study complicate or highlight issues raised in the reading?
- How does the case from Kyrgyzstan relate to your home country?

The short write this week should be a way of guiding students into and preparing them for the activity. The faculty should think through the best way to do this with their individual class.

**Activity – 25-35 minutes**

The activity for this week is to begin putting together a history timeline. The timeline should be drawn on a large piece of paper, on a white/chalk board, or done via computer program. The aim of the activity is for students to begin placing the various elements that the course has discussed so far on the timeline in chronological order. From there, the students should begin filling the timeline in with various other important events. These should be both international and, more importantly, local events.

This activity aims to work through the connections between local and global and to put these connections into a global perspective. This should be done via the medium of the move from WID to GAD, using this as a way of thinking through chronological events.

From this, the students should begin to assess why they put what events/items on their timeline, and what sorts of events were left out and why. Through this entire activity the aim is to get
students to think historically, and to make broad-based connections. Too often we can lose focus on the bigger picture.

**Concluding Discussion – 5-15 minutes**

The concluding discussion should seek to bring together the work done during the Activity with the previous discussions. As part of this, the faculty member is strongly encouraged to bring discussions from previous class periods into conversation with the current topics. Through this, the aim is to start forming stronger connections between the topics over the entire period of the course.
Readings

Chapter 6. Eco-Feminisms

Photo 20: Janyzakova, Myrzabekova, and Kim
Introduction

In the 1970s feminists began drawing parallels between men’s control over women and male control over nature. This allowed for insisting that there is ecological feminist movement which claimed that the environment was a feminist issue. Today, the name ecological feminism is used to denote a variety of positions with roots in different feminist practices and philosophies and different understanding of environment and environmental problems. The main goal of ecofeminism is to make visible connections between ‘woman’ and ‘nature’ and where these are harmful to women and nature, to dismantle them (Warren, 1987).

Liberal eco-feminists made connections among masculine science and industrialization and the damage to the environmental health of the planet. Women-scholars argued that development understood as culture and progress takes place through exploitation of natural and human resources. Ecofeminists such as Vandana Shiva and Marie Mies argued that it was the Western patriarchy that produced modern understanding of science and progress that were killing nature in the Third World by imposing ideologies which were often drastically different from other cultures which have entire different relations with the natural world. Vandana Shiva, for example, put forward a claim that women in India resisted the dominant ideas of development through industrialization and urbanization by protecting nature preserving thereby their sustenance. They formed forefronts of struggles to conserve forests, land and water.

Social eco-feminists like Bina Agarwal disagreed with a romanticized association between women and environment as biological and natural. Instead, they argued that the relationships between women and environment must be understood in terms of productive and reproductive roles in economy. For instance, it was important to understand that women struggle for environment not so much because of their biological predispositions to do so but because of the way they were affected by environmental degradation and had gender-differentiated access to natural resources. Karen Waren identified at least eight ways in which women and nature were connected. These eight connections are derived from different ecofeminist positions.

1. Historical, typically causal connections. As described above, these refer to prototypical patterns of domination associated with the invasion of nomadic Eurasian tribes by Indo-European societies beginning in 4500 BC and later accompanied by modern science which sanctioned exploitation of nature, industrial expansion and subordination of women.
2. Conceptual connections. Construction of women and nature are male-biased and the nature of their being dominated by men is conceptually structured in such a way. This has to deal with value dualism and value hierarchies wherein values such as reason/emotion, mind/body, culture/nature, human/nature, man/woman are dichotomous and hierarchically organized. For example, emotion, body, nature and women were regarded as inferior to what was associated with reason, mind, culture and men. These hierarchical dualisms explains, justifies and maintains relationships of domination and subordination. Conceptually, female bodily experiences such as reproduction and child-bearing were claimed to place women differently in relation to nature than men and allegedly provided a different consciousness in women.

3. Empirical and experiential connections. These connections focus on uncovering empirical evidence which link women with environmental destruction such as health and risk factors borne disproportionately by women and children caused by pollution. This would also include criticism of the First World developing policies negatively affecting the Third World women’s ability to continue with their sustenance.

4. Symbolic connections. Some ecofeminists explore symbolic association and devaluation of women and nature that appears in art, literature, religion, etc. They document such connections and create alternative spiritualities which are liberating, life-affirming and post-patriarchal. For example, some ecofeminists drew on literate and literary criticism to show how patriarchal conceptions of nature and women have justified the twin-rape of the earth and the women.

5. Epistemological connections are about dismantling rationalism of the Western philosophical tradition and development of the views of the ethical self that confronts and destroys the harmful value dualism and hierarchies.

6. Political connections. Feminist political ecologists pursued three major themes:
   - gendered knowledge
   - gendered environmental rights including property, resource and space
   - gendered environmental politics, in particular, women’s involvement in collective struggles over resources and environmental issues (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari, 1996).

7. Ethical connections address the area of environmental philosophy known as ‘environmental ethics’. Here, the claim is that the connections between the conceptualization and treatment of women, animals and nature require a feminist ethical analysis and response. The response may
include development of theories and practices that are not male-biased. This may also involve development of ethics of care and appropriate reciprocity, ecofeminist ecology, etc., because the mainstream environmental ethics are believed to be inadequate.

8. Theoretical connections are various theoretical positions in all areas of feminist and environmental ethics.

Eco-feminism has not been without critics. The strongest one refers to the strong women-nature connection which has been seen as an expression of essentialism. Some disidentify themselves from the concept of eco-feminists because of such criticism. Groupings within this movement produced those who identify as ecowomanism (with a focus on race as the primary lens through which to view oppression), animal-rights-oriented eco-feminism, pro-indigenous people feminists, spiritual eco-feminists, etc. Since 1970 eco-feminism grows and shifts and takes different forms and alliances characterized the movement and will continue to do so.
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

The vignette for this chapter is contained within the reading section at the back of the Handbook. The vignette is a report from UNDP, “Gender, Poverty, and Environment in Rural Kyrgyzstan: Issues of Natural Resource Management, Biodiversity, and Environmental Degradation”.
Lesson Plan

Discussion – 20 minutes
The aim in this first part of the discussion is to become coming to grips with the topic and texts read. The discussion should start with sharing of the reflective pieces that the students just previously wrote.

During this time, the faculty member should build on the students’ reflections and insights, seeking to form bridges between these experiences and ideas with those of the readings and case studies. It is especially important to get students to work through the case study and apply some of the insights, stories, or thoughts from these vignettes to their own lives and countries.

Essay Writing Exercise – 50 minutes
In this activity, students should undertake an in-class essay. As usual, how this should be undertaken depends on the resources available to the faculty and the students. If possible, students should be given time to work in the library to find sources; or, similarly, given time in a computer lab.

The faculty member should provide an assignment sheet for the in-class essay that fits within the core requirements of the course. Writing in class provides students the opportunity to work on actively engaging in writing practice, while also allowing the faculty member to oversee this and provide hands-on and real-time assistance.
Readings


Chapter 7. Environment in Development

Photo 21: Zhenish, Myrabekova, and Kim
Introduction

Global development processes have been shaped by prevailing development paradigms which
underlined the importance of different routes and methodologies to pursue development objectives.
Paradigms and theories such as modernization, dependency, world-systems theory, etc., have guided
development practice since mid-twentieth century. Up to sixties and seventies of the last century
development was focused on growth and accumulation of wealth through industrialization, trade and
institutional strengthening. All these processes brought changes into social and cultural lives of people
in the global South which forced reconsideration of growth-based model and raised questions about the
limits to development and negative effects of natural resource exploitation, the so-called “limits to
growth” (Meadows et al, 1972). The economic, food and financial crisis of the eighties and 2007-2008
highlighted weaknesses of economic development. International community began to focus more on
eradicating poverty and sustainable use of natural resources.

Sustainable development

Sustainable Development (SD) as a concept is known to have its origins in 1972 at the United Nations
Conference on Human Environment. Many sources agree that in 1983 the World Commission on
Environment and Development was tasked by the UN Secretary General to re-examine environmental
and development problems and formulate proposals to address those. This resulted in the 1987
Brundtland Report, called “Our Common Future” and the 1992 United Nations Conference on
Environment and Development (UNCED) in Stockholm, Sweden (also known as the Earth Summit) gave
the concept its momentum. The Brundtland Report initiated a call for integration of economic
development, environmental protection and social justice. Today, the most widely accepted definition
of Sustainable Development is the one that focuses on development that “meets the needs of the
present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The Earth Summit had a variety of primary outputs, many of which remain powerful frameworks
up to today. These are
• The Rio Declaration, which set out 27 principles of sustainable development
• Forest Principles, which recognize the importance of forests for economic and social development, indigenous communities, biodiversity, etc.
• Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change
• Agenda 21, which contained Sustainable Development Plan of Action to be be implemented by national governments.

Since 1992 Earth Summit, the UN developed a wide range of programs, institutions and international agreements to achieve global sustainable development. Among the latest significant milestones was the 2012 UN Conference Rio +20 which resulted in the document called “The Future We Want” in which the member States reaffirmed their commitment to all Sustainable Development agreements, plans and targets. They committed to develop a suite of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) building on the priorities identified in Agenda 21.

The Common principles of the Sustainable Development agreements and strategies include:

• Living within environmental limits;
• Integrated decision making;
• Good governance that is democratic, transparent, inclusive, participatory and accountable;
• Responsible use of robust and credible scientific evidence in decision making.

In practical terms, sustainable development implies minimizing the use of resources such as oil and oil products, also fishstock, wildlife, forests, water, land, air, etc. Air and water pollution, deforestation, depletion of fish stock are all examples of non-sustainable activities. Today, the concept includes social sustainability and financial and economic sustainability.

In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration which has eight chapters and key objectives among which Respect for nature – “Shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development (under Values and Principles) and Chapter 4 “Protecting our Common Environment”.

Following the Millennium Summit, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted to be achieved by the year 2015. Among the eight development goals the number 7 is “to ensure environmental
sustainability”. In 2016 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the MDGs. Day the SDGs are also known as “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or Agenda 2030.

The SDGs are 17 interrelated global goals each with a number of targets (169). Issues covered by the SDGs include gender equality, climate change, water, sanitation, energy and environment as stand-alone and cross-cutting issues.

Criticism of sustainable development policies focuses on the little progress towards sustainability (http://www.globalissues.org/article/408/sustainable-development-introduction). They believe that sustainable development is an urgent issue but the political will has been too slow-paced. Among the examples of the little progress are the following numbers:

- 1.3 billion people do not have access to clean water;
- about a half of world population lives on less than 2 dollars a day;
- about half of world population lack access to adequate sanitation
- about two billion people live without access to electricity
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

This week’s vignette comes in the form of three documents, two PEI documents and one by the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The first, directly below, outlines processes and practices of interventions. In this way it allows students another avenue for understanding the entire process of development research and work. The second vignette is below in the readings, titled “UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative” which has some of the key facts from UNDP PEI in Bishkek. The third document is titled ‘Human Dimension of the Sustainable Development in Kyrgyzstan’ by the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.

PEI Interventions

In response to identified challenges, PEI focuses efforts in three key areas with capacity building as a crosscutting objective:

1. P-E approaches and tools for integrated development policies, plans and coordination mechanisms applied
2. National knowledge base is strengthened on cross-sectoral budget and expenditure frameworks, coordination mechanisms, and environment-economic accounting systems

Progress

1. Sustainable development methodological framework endorsed by Ministry of Economy as main planning guideline and applied to integrate national pro-poor environmental sustainability objectives into the National Sustainable Development Strategy (2013-2017), the Government’s Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development (2013-2017), and four provincial development plans.
2. South-south collaboration with Czech Republic: System of Economic-Environmental Accounting roadmap developed. Initial pilot work on economic valuation of forest ecosystems.
3. Partnership with UN Women increased knowledge and understanding of the linkages between gender, women’s empowerment, and environmental sustainability to reduce inequality, drawing from key findings of the joint research on Gender, Poverty, Environment and Biodiversity.

4. Official adoption of the green growth indicators as part of the national system of sustainable development indicators.

5. Developed the first Poverty and Social Impact Assessment on pasture management in the country.

6. Inter-ministerial coordination mechanism at national level led by Minister of Economy upgraded to an SDG Coordination Committee under the Prime Minister.

Remaining Interventions

1. Use PEI supported research and experience for the integration of pro-poor environmental sustainability objectives in the upcoming 2018-2023 National Development Plan and in the 2030 long term development strategy.

2. Complete Public and Private Environmental Expenditure Review (PEER) on biodiversity and climate change in partnership with the UNDP Biodiversity Financing Initiative (Biofin) to identify gaps in public and private financial flows related to environment and natural resources.

3. Support capacity building of the Ministry of Economy and other relevant actors in the monitoring of green growth indicators.

4. (and partly 1) Continue the partnership with Germany’s GIZ to introduce ecosystem-based development planning approaches using valuation of ecosystem services and a System of Economic-Environmental Accounting-Experimental Ecosystems Accounting (SEEA-EEA) through pilot work in the forestry sector.

5. Identify poverty-environment mainstreaming champions among political and civil society leaders to widen and sustain the base for national ownership and sustainability.

Achievements:
• PEI’s work with the Ministry of Economy facilitated by direct leadership and involvement of the Minister, as a PEI champion, has significantly contributed to the initiation, development and adoption of the two key strategic documents of country’s development – National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2013-2017 and Government’s Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017 (PTSD).

• The project supports the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the strengthening capacity of its Department of Strategic Planning and key ministries and agencies at the national and regional levels in strategic planning for sustainable development. The analysis and evaluation of the results of research on the long-term priorities of sustainable development for 2013-2013 carried out. Recommendations for their use in the framework of the adaptation of Global Sustainable Development Goals developed as well as the long-term priorities of sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030.

• Methodology of sustainable development strategic planning at national and regional levels developed and approved.

• Expert support to finalize the Batken and Jalal-Abad regions Development Programs, taking into account issues of sustainable development provided.

• Activities on sustainable pasture management and introduction of the “One Village - One Product” model the “Green Village” are being implemented in Naryn, Osh and Batken oblasts jointly with the UNDP Area Based Development Offices of Naryn, Osh and Batken oblasts.

• Assess the impact of the management of pastures on poverty and social issues. The result will be worked out strong, sound and stable financial advice to the government, give direction to the further spread of these practices in other regions of the country.

• Impact assessment of the pastures management on poverty and social issues conducted. As a result, sound and financially stable recommendations with further distribution of these practices in other regions of the country worked out.

• Jointly with the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic work for the implementation of environmental-economic accounting carried out. This activity was co-financed by the Czech Trust Fund. An experience in the development and application of environmental-economic accounting and experimental ecosystem accounting reviewed, the capacity for their implementation in Kyrgyzstan analyzed and methodological recommendations developed in close consultation with the NSC, SAEPF, Ministry of Economy, GTZ and CAREC.
Based on the recommendations of the study, the project carries out preparatory work to improve the capacity of the NSC and the key stakeholders, piloting an experimental environmental accounting in the Kyrgyz Republic.

- Assessment of ecosystem services conducted jointly with together with the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- An interagency working group under the SAEPF established with the aim to facilitate the work of environmental-economic accounting for coordination activity on the assessment of key ecosystem services and to develop a methodological basis for valuation of biodiversity. The activity conducted in accordance with the National Sustainable Development Strategy till 2017, the Programme of the Government on Transition to Sustainable Development for 2014-2017, the Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Biodiversity of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2014-2020.
- The Initiative supports local educational institutions in mainstreaming gender-specific activities, including research on gender aspects of poverty, biodiversity, climate change links, and in developing a training courses, academic competition, communications products. This activity is carried out in collaboration with the UNDP-GEF “Improving coverage and management effectiveness of protected areas in the mountains of Central Tien Shan” Project and the United Nations Women.
- The Initiative supports the Naryn State University in organizing an experience exchange with relevant educational institutions in the field of sustainable pasture management in Naryn oblast.
Lesson Plan

**Activity – 60 minutes**

Seeking to continue the previous week’s engaging activities, this week is flipping the script and putting students at the forefront of the class. This week students should – in small groups (2-4) – come up with presentations on a particular element from the readings. Depending on the classroom set up and schedule, the preparation for the presentation can either be done in class or outside of class.

The aim of the activity is to allow students the opportunity to practice their oral presentation skills. This also allows students to absorb and reflect on the readings and information in distinct ways from simply reading them. By having to present the material to the class, the groups will process the information in different ways.

Students should be encouraged to utilize the two vignettes for this week to assist them in their presentation.

**Concluding Discussion – 15 minutes**

The concluding discussion should seek to bring together the work done during the Activity with the previous discussions. As part of this, the faculty member is strongly encouraged to bring discussions from previous class periods into conversation with the current topics. Through this, the aim is to start forming stronger connections between the topics over the entire period of the course.

Chapter 8. Addressing Poverty Across Cultures

Photo 22: Zhenish, Myrzabekova, and Kim
Introduction

When we talk about ‘poverty’, what exactly is it that we are referring to? And, importantly, who gets to determine how poverty is thusly defined? In much the same way as how we define what comfort is, poverty is a slippery concept in some ways; while simultaneously being dramatically clear.

One of the most prominent examples of discussions of poverty comes from China, where, in the past thirty or so years, roughly between 500 and 700 million people have been lifted out of extreme poverty. According to the World Bank “China’s poverty rate fell from 88 percent in 1981 to 6.5 percent in 2012, as measured by the percentage of people living on less than $1.90 a day” (Schmitz 2017). In this example, we can see a clear and definitive definition of what ‘poverty’ is: living on less than $1.90 a day.

One might ask of this why it is the US Dollar that forms the overarching currency by which all others are measured. This reality – one that is not confined to defining the international poverty line – itself makes a statement about who is able to define poverty, and on what sets of principles and political priorities are subsumed and attached to this metric. Through the use of the dollar as the universal metric by which countries and their economies are judged sets up a prioritization of a specific neoliberal model of economy, that is held in place by US hegemony culturally.

The $1.90 number is based on a variety of factors. The $1.90 is the international poverty line. The international poverty line was introduced in 1990 in the World Development Report. At the point of its creation, the international poverty line was set at $1 dollar a day. The idea for an international poverty line started with two concerns:

“From the beginning, the idea was to measure income poverty with respect to a demanding line which, first, reflects the standards of absolute poverty in the world’s poorest countries and, second, corresponded to the same real level of well-being in all countries. The first requirement led researchers to anchor the international poverty line on the national poverty lines of very poor developing countries. And the second requirement led them to use purchasing power parity exchange rates (PPPs) – rather than nominal ones - to convert the line into the US dollar and, more importantly, into the currencies of each developing country” (Ferreira 2015).

Entwined in these components are critical pieces for us to understand, most importantly purchasing power parity. PPP is, in general senses, a way of comparing costs of items in different countries and establishing a form of level to make this comparison. The difficulty with setting up an international poverty, particularly based on PPP, is that PPP changes every few years, making it a challenge to come to
grips with what exactly it is one is talking about when they are discussing ‘poverty’ at any given moment. Another, more interesting possibly and certainly less ‘scientific’, method of establishing a comparison of costs in countries is called the “Big Mac Index”, which compares the prices of buying a Big Mac from McDonald’s in countries around the world.

Both systems have their drawbacks and flaws – with the international poverty line based on PPP struggling as the US Dollar becomes weaker in relation to local currencies in weaker economies, and, as such, providing a seemingly relatively consistent level of poverty in countries rather than establishing or showcasing dramatic changes in this (Ferreira 2015). Similarly, the Big Mac Index, while an interesting matrix from which to judge prices, does not provide an overarching comment regarding poverty; and falls flat, as more than a few impoverished countries do not have McDonalds – often because they do not have a strong enough economy to support meeting McDonald’s specific requirements franchising.

Measures of Poverty

What escapes most of the systems for defining what ‘poverty’ is a substantive analysis of issues of well-being, happiness, and the unmeasurable elements the comprise life. This can be put into conversation with matrixes, some of which stem out of the formerly colonized parts of the world, such as the Bhutanese Happiness Index. The ‘Gross National Happiness Indicator’ is “a supplementary, sometimes alternative, yardstick to the conventional measure of development, gross domestic product” (Schultz 2017). In this system, rather than looking at GDP – which relates back to PPP and the power of the individual, in a variety of (complicated) ways – it looks to address whether and how happy people are. One of the general trends that has emerged from this scale is that in many of the economically wealthier countries, they score on the lower end of the happiness index; suggesting an inverse relation between the economic growth or power of a country and its happiness.

This inverse relationship pulls at the strings of simplistic notions of poverty or wealth, forcing a consideration of well-being into the equation. This is not to discount extreme poverty and lack of access to resources, but is meant to complicate simplistic understandings of how we understand poverty, or how measurable poverty is in its fullest sense. For, when measuring poverty from a strictly economic sense, where does sense of well-being or ability to engage in leisure. A true conception of poverty – or its opposite, wealth – must also encapsulate an ability to grapple with the complicated components that make up a social situation where opportunities are given (to the wealthy) or are denied (to the poor).
Poverty Across Cultures

With this in mind, it becomes even more pressing that in undertaking an assessment of poverty levels within any given context that cultural conditions, traditions, and beliefs are taking into consideration. For, to know what is culturally valued and whether and how this connects with a sense of connection within society is a necessary piece of developing a metric for evaluating poverty within the locale. As mentioned above, the designation of poverty most often used is not just based on the US currency or economy, but also on notions of what is culturally preferred or valued.

To fully understand poverty, it requires that the conception of ‘poverty’ itself is unpacked and understood, so as to gain full understanding of what it takes, within a specific location, to live a liveable life. Any conception of a liveable life expands out from financial security into any number of other factors. To be liveable, a life must include – to greater and lesser degrees, and with distinct definitions for each of these - senses of satisfaction, well-being, happiness, and leisure. The goal of any measurement of poverty must include an understanding of how liveable a life is in that context.

In building a definition of what constitutes a liveable life in any locale, one must include measures for gender (in)equality and the treatment of natural resources and the environment. These are necessary components for a liveable life. To be free from harassment or violence; to be free of extreme pollution. In parts of the world there are increasing levels of environmental destruction, which is, at this point, dramatically impacting on individual’s day-to-day lives. One thinks of cities like Beijing of New Delhi, where pollution has become so bad that it is causing impacts on people’s life expectancy and how they are able to go about their days and lives. Similarly, one can see the expansive impacts that gender inequality has on the lives of many women and girls around the world, with the World Health Organization (WHO) indicating “that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime” (WHO 2017). It would be hard to deny that this level of violence would have a dramatic impact on people’s understandings of their lives.
Vignette from PEI Kyrgyzstan

The vignette for this week is attached at the end in the supplementary materials due to its length and formatting. The document is titled “POVERTY AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PSIA)” Report for the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI).
Lesson Plan

Activity – 60 minutes

Today’s activity will be a form of Role Playing. The faculty member should construct a number of people’s identities; this should take the shape of a Passport, with further information. Each student will be given one of these passports and throughout the class they should take on the role of the person in the passport.

Each passport will have the basic details (Name, age, gender, country, ethnicity, occupation, and wealth) and each will have its own set of secondary details (such as: religion, disabilities, personal history details). In this way, each student should take on a completely different persona. Depending on the resources and space available, the faculty should set up ‘borders’ for students to have to encounter and cross. Some of the student’s passports should state their occupation as “police”, and they will be assigned to patrol the borders. They will also “be forced” to “eject” some students from the classroom and to hinder their movements.

The aim of this activity is to begin coming to grips with the complicated and intersecting roles that each person carries with them through each interaction. The faculty member should set up a number of small ways to engage students specifically. Throughout the period the faculty should also be leading a discussion on the topic.

As part of this the faculty can engage the class in various fashions; through discussions, debates, or presentations. The faculty can choose how theatrical or engaged the activity is; with some choosing to seek to bring students as deeply into the activity as possible, and others using it as a device to work through various issues and more as a useful talking point.

Reflective Writing – 10-15 minutes

Writing prompts should address the main components, arguments, or examples from the case and the reading. The goal of this writing is twofold. Firstly, it is to allow each student some time to process the
topic through writing, in a minimally directed fashion. Secondly, it is to allow the students the opportunity to gain valuable practice writing. These pieces are ungraded and are meant solely for the student’s benefit rather than assessment.

Some suggestions for the writing prompt for this week are:

- Discuss how the activity changed your perspective on travel and borders?
- What did the activity tell you about poverty?
- How does this activity assist in understanding the context of poverty and its connection with gender and the environment?

Bibliography


https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/assesslearning/conceptmaps.html


IUCN (2016b) ‘Inclusion and characterization of women and gender equality considerations in the fifth national reports to the CBD’. *IUCN*. Washington DC: IUCN.


UNDP (2017b) Reviewing environmental financing policy and expenditure in the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek: UNDP.


Appendix 1: Further Readings

Below are a varied set of readings that might be interest to either the faculty or students. This list is by no means an exhaustive list, nor is it intended to be so. The aim of the list below is to provide the curious reader some more texts that could assist them in continuing to learn and work through these issues.

- Adaptation to climate change in the developing world, W. N. Adger et al. 2003

- Sustainable livelihoods: Lessons from early experience. C. Ashley & D. Carney 1999


Supplementary Materials

- Chapter 1 Vignette
  - UNDP-UNEP PEI ‘Poverty-Environment Initiative in the Kyrgyz Republic: Outcomes of Phase 1’

- Chapter 2 Vignette
  - ‘UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative ECIS Gender Strategy 2015-2017’ by the PEI Regional Team

- Chapter 4 Vignette
  - ‘Reviewing environmental financing policy and expenditure in the Kyrgyz Republic’
  - *Sustainable Development in Kyrgyzstan: Regional Aspect* by the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.
  - *Gender-Environment Mainstreaming in Tajikistan* by Henrieta Martonakova and Zumrad Kataeva.

- Chapter 6 Vignette
  - “Gender, Poverty, and Environment in Rural Kyrgyzstan: Issues of Natural Resource Management, Biodiversity, and Environmental Degradation” by UNDP

- Chapter 7 Vignette
  - “UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative” by PEI Kyrgyzstan
  - ‘Human Dimension of the Sustainable Development in Kyrgyzstan’ by the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic

- Chapter 8 Vignette
  - “POVERTY AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PSIA)” Report for the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI)
This teaching handbook will be a guide for faculty around the world to teach the Master’s level course titled ‘Poverty, Environment, and Gender’. Set up with short introductions, each chapter provides some fundamental information on the topic as well as a vignette of practical data or research, followed by several readings. In this way, each chapter is meant to be used for one or two weeks of a class. The teaching handbook utilizes as its primary case the United Nations Development Program Poverty-Environment Initiative’s work in Kyrgyzstan. In this way, PEI Kyrgyzstan’s vast and important work is put into practice and acts as a further tool for learning in the course. The goal is that the wonderful insights from PEI Kyrgyzstan’s research and work can be brought into conversation with the local situations where the course is taught.

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:
- Understand the importance of “gender” as a variable for promoting sustainable development and environment;
- Understand role of poverty in environmental management and use;
- Critically analyze and critique examine why it is important to incorporate gender considerations into the design and implementation of environmental policy;
- And be able to demonstrate new skills in research, analysis, policy action, leadership, and public engagement.