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# Gender Assessment USAID/Armenia



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# GENDER ASSESSMENT

## USAID/Armenia

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**Cover photo:** Yeva Avakyan, “Traditional dolls displayed at Vernissage market in Yerevan”

**Back cover:** Yeva Avakyan, Sculpture (“Hare on Bell”, by B. Flanagan) overlooking Yerevan, with Mt. Ararat on the horizon.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ADS</b>	Automated Directives System
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>AO</b>	Assistance objective
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>DPO</b>	Disabled persons' organization
<b>E&amp;E</b>	Europe and Eurasia
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal year
<b>GBV</b>	Gender based violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GEM</b>	Gender empowerment measure
<b>GTG</b>	Gender Theme Group
<b>HIV</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus
<b>IR</b>	Intermediate result
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>IUD</b>	Intrauterine device
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MSM</b>	Men who have sex with men
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PMP</b>	Performance Management Plan
<b>SESA</b>	State Employment Service Agency
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium enterprise
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infection
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>VAW</b>	Violence against women
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development

## Executive Summary

During a July 2010 visit by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, USAID/Armenia hosted a roundtable on the achievements of Armenian women and the challenges they face in realizing their rights and achieving gender equality. U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Melanne Vermeer, participated in the event that was attended by Armenian women leaders from the fields of politics, healthcare, business and civil society. The discussion highlighted both the capacity and resources that Armenian women can lend to the development of their country but also some of the serious institutional barriers that are preventing them from doing so.

The transition period has not been smooth for Armenia, but real progress has been made in a number of areas. Unfortunately, recognition of women's potential to contribute more to these processes has been limited. Despite long-standing traditions of women taking an active part in the political, economic, religious and artistic life of the country, experts note that notions of Armenian culture are often used to justify women's limited public role today. There is also a sense that many of the positive aspects of the Soviet system, in terms of incentives for women's participation in politics and the workforce, now carry negative associations and there is limited discussion of whether some of these policies are still relevant. One of Armenia's unique points is its extensive Diaspora community, but the values of this group are not uniform. Western notions of women's open role in public life compete with more patriarchal traditions from the East.

Early governmental reform efforts beginning after independence focused on improving the status of women in Armenia, with particular attention to women's reproductive role, motherhood and family. While the National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for 2004-2010 addresses a greater range of issues, including women in decision-making, the economy, education, health, mass media and violence against women, monitoring indicates that the Action Plan is largely declarative and has not been implemented. Additionally, national machinery for gender equality has not been established. Recent positive changes, however, suggest that this situation may be changing. The approval of the Gender Policy Concept Paper, in February 2010, established the first national-level statement of policy and strategy on gender equality. The Gender Policy is expected to influence the development of a national action plan on gender equality for 2011-2015 and adoption of the Law "*On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women.*" It is hoped that a more comprehensive system to advance gender equality will be instituted and also that a wider dialog will emerge about how gender equality not only improves the status of women but is good for all of society.

Significant differences persist in the roles and status of women and men in Armenia, influenced by patriarchal culture and traditions. Cultural norms and stereotypes are quite rigid and account for a number of the obstacles facing women, such as societal notions that women are generally not decision-makers in the public sphere and women's own lack of confidence and perceptions of their dependence on men. While Armenian women are highly educated, present in the workforce and active members of civil society, prevailing norms still dictate that they are primarily responsible for household duties and childcare. There are few initiatives, if any, to address such widely held stereotypes or the double burden on women of taking care of household duties and working outside the home. Employers have largely not taken measures to improve the work-life balance for women but often give preference to male candidates. For these reasons, women, especially those of childbearing age, have a limited influence in the public sphere. Masculine identity in Armenia is closely linked to outward appearances of status, power and strength, and men are unlikely to exhibit help-seeking behavior in any number of spheres, for example healthcare, professional training and skill building, use of citizen and social services, or reporting corruption.

USAID/Armenia recognizes the gender differences described briefly above and strives to promote gender equality in which both men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political development; enjoy socially valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights. USAID/Armenia addresses gender as an important factor in both strategic planning and project design. In order to facilitate strategic thinking about gender when refining assistance objectives, intermediate results and indicators and in program planning for FY2010-FY2013 and to complement gender analysis included in the Mission's four-year Assistance Objective Results Frameworks, USAID/Armenia identified the need for a fuller assessment of the most significant gender issues in Armenia today. Specifically, the task of this assessment was to analyze the current roles and relationships of men and women and to determine how any differences could have either a positive or negative impact on the strategy going forward. The resulting report highlights key findings in the areas that are most closely related to USAID programming and also provides recommendations and considerations to ensure that future programming responds to the different roles and status of women and men and potential impact of USAID programming on these roles. A summary of the main findings and selected recommendations for USAID/Armenia follows.

### **Democratic Governance and Civic Participation**

A healthy democracy is one in which women and men have equal opportunities to influence the governing of their country and in which their concerns are heard. At present, significant obstacles prevent Armenia's transition to a fully functional and representational democracy, and there are important differences in the abilities of women and men to engage in democratic processes, to raise issues of their concern and to access justice to redress violations of their rights. Women have very little influence over policy decisions due to their lack of representation in decision-making positions. While a quota system ensures women are represented in political parties, they face distinct barriers to entering office at the local and national level. Gender equality has not been a priority for the country and most women-oriented policies have focused on reproductive and maternal health and not civil and political rights. Women are better represented in civil society, but women's NGOs lack the capacity to advocate for their inclusion in government policy decisions. The media is not gender sensitive, lacks professionalism, includes few stories about or of concern to women and rarely reports the opinions of female experts. Mass media outlets reinforce gender stereotypes and in some cases use sexist images of women. Media outlets also perpetuate homophobia and the stigmatization of and intolerance towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

Women are vulnerable to specific rights violations, particularly in employment, due to their lack of legal knowledge and lower economic status. International and domestic prohibitions on sex-based discrimination are not widely recognized or understood as a legal concept that can be redressed in court. The democracy and governance programs of USAID/Armenia should ensure that women have opportunities to meaningfully engage with the government and that their concerns are reflected in democratization processes.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Support gender-sensitivity training and continuing legal education for justice system and legal professionals that includes such topics as sex-based discrimination, discrimination based on sexual orientation/ gender identity, sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Watchdog organizations and citizens should monitor the disposition of legal cases in which women are the most likely to be involved and negatively affected (e.g. family law, divorce cases, domestic violence, labor law violations).
- Promote Council of Europe policy on gender equality, non-discrimination and violence against women among legal professionals, including European human rights treaty obligations, recommendations and European Court of Human Rights case law.

- Promote the use of gender-responsive budgeting exercises to address gaps in government policies, plans and budgets, increase accountability for public expenditures and improve women's access to services and resources.
- Provide capacity building and support for women's civil society organizations to promote their interests in government reform and to serve as monitors of government processes that impact women's rights.
- Support think tanks that take a gender-sensitive approach to policy analysis as well as conduct research on issues that specifically concern women (for example, constraints to businesswomen) and men (for instance, patterns of male health-seeking behavior).
- Educate political parties on the value of women's leadership in the party, the creation of mechanisms for the advancement of women within the party structure and development of issue-based campaigns that respond to the concerns of female voters.
- Facilitate information exchange between NGOs that work on specific women's issues and political parties/candidates.
- Ensure the inclusion of female leaders and activists at the community level and promote their greater participation on community councils.
- Promote professional standards of ethics and gender sensitivity in the media sector to improve the coverage of female experts and authorities in the media, to increase attention to issues of special concern to women and to challenge stereotyping and eliminate hate speech.
- Promote positive models and images of women in leadership positions using mass media outlets.
- Support projects on leadership skills for girls and young women.

### **Economic Development and Private Sector Competitiveness**

Armenia saw considerable economic growth in the mid 2000's, but this pattern has reversed in the last years, partially related to the global economic downturn. While the population as a whole has been affected by the recession, arguably women had not benefited to the same extent as men from earlier GDP growth and are, therefore, not well positioned to benefit equally from future economic expansion. Distinct gender inequalities in the economy and labor market have a profound impact on women. They occupy a precarious position in terms of hiring, job retention and promotion, and segregation in the labor market means that women tend to work in lower-paid sectors and positions and are on average paid less than men. There is little recognition in the private sector that efficient and competitive businesses are those that attract and retain a diverse workforce. Programs to improve the life-work balance are rare in Armenia and policies on extreme forms of discrimination, such as sexual harassment, are also uncommon. Women entrepreneurs mainly run micro and small businesses and have limited access to the financial resources and social capital that would encourage growth. Special approaches are needed to improve women's economic opportunities and labor contribution.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Business advisory and development services should include human resources policies on such issues as non-discriminatory hiring, promotion and termination practices, and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Seek business-sector partners that have corporate diversity strategies and employee development programs for women.
- Promote the use of mentoring programs to assist women to take on leadership positions in the workplace.
- Assess the risks and potential negative consequences of targeting sectors that present distinct gender imbalances or in which women and men have unequal control over assets and capital.
- Invest in workplace programs that improve women's access to career advancement and encourage women in non-traditional fields.

- Support analysis of gender-specific obstacles to business growth, including barriers faced by women-owned businesses and micro and small businesses where women predominate.
- Analyze the lending market in Armenia through a gender lens to identify specific obstacles to women obtaining credit. Additional gender analysis could be conducted of value chains.
- Support gender sensitive solutions among lending institutions, specifically regarding access to credit, lending barriers and business support.
- Integrate gender considerations, such as the different energy needs, uses and priorities of women and men, in the formulation of energy policy, in technical assistance and in project implementation.
- Conduct gender and environmental impact studies that reveal the consequences to women and men living in areas where infrastructure construction projects are undertaken.
- At the community level, ensure that women and men have equal representation in decision-making on infrastructure improvements.
- In infrastructure improvement projects, engage women's NGOs in Armenia that address environmental issues.

### **Health and Social Protection**

As in other sectors, men and women have distinct needs in regard to healthcare and social services and also have different opportunities to access them. Some of these differences are based on biological factors but a great many are influenced by attitudinal and behavioral factors. Use of contraception and family planning has improved in Armenia, but overall rates remain low, and abortion remains a common solution to unplanned pregnancies. Further efforts are needed to address some of the factors that impact women's ability to use modern contraception, such as the availability and cost of contraception, women's knowledge, gender inequalities and women's ability to negotiate safe sex and domestic violence. Men's engagement in family planning is limited but could be improved. Men are less likely to exhibit health-seeking behavior generally and so health promotion messages should target men and increase male responsibility for their own wellbeing and that of their partners and children. Reform efforts also present opportunities to address other important public health issues for women, particularly gender-based violence.

Pension reform efforts in Armenia reveal that women are at distinct risk for becoming impoverished in older age, due to their longer lifespan but shorter work history, which results in a smaller pension paid out over a longer period. Women, as well as young people in general, face higher unemployment rates due in part to disparities between educational programs and the skills required by the current job market. The intersection between gender and disability has not been well articulated in Armenia, and thus is it difficult to characterize the distinct needs of disabled men and women as well as their abilities to access health and social services. There, are, however, active disabled persons' organizations that could be supported.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Promote the practice of gender-sensitive auditing of basic service delivery to determine how Armenian Government funds are allocated to health and social protection programs targeting specifically women or men and whether they are effectively addressing the needs of socially vulnerable populations.
- Disaggregate data by sex in reporting on household expenditures and individual citizen's out-of-pocket payments for health care.
- Analyze whether the pension system can equitably provide for vulnerable groups, such as women and caretakers of disabled persons, and flexibly take into consideration their time spent in unpaid work.

- Ensure that reproductive health, maternal and child health and family planning services are accessible to greater numbers of women, especially marginalized women, for example women living in rural areas, partners of labor migrants, disabled women, victims of domestic violence etc.
- Promote men's participation in family planning and maternal and child health through activities targeting men as responsible partners.
- Ensure that men's specific health concerns, including sexual and reproductive health, are addressed by the current system, with specific attention to vulnerable populations and underserved groups such as labor migrants, young men and MSMs.
- Monitor the extent to which State Employment Service Agency (SESA) services are accessible to unemployed men and whether re-training programs provide skills that match current market demands for both men and women, as well as men and women with disabilities.
- Facilitate the dissemination of vacancies in non-traditional fields, such as technical professions, to a wider network of potential women candidates.
- Support the creation of databases/ rosters of qualified female professionals in order to increase recruitment and promotion of women in fields in which there is gender imbalance.
- Social marketing campaigns should address health issues specific to men and women and also be adapted to the needs and concerns of minority groups.
- Support gender-sensitive healthy lifestyle programs aimed at boys and girls, young men and women that address such topics as substance abuse, sexual health, negotiation and dating, family planning, tolerance and gender roles.
- Public education and citizen engagement campaigns related to the pension reform process should use gender-specific approaches and messages about the new pension system.

## **Gender-Based Violence**

A number of respondents to this assessment mentioned gender-based violence, specifically violence against women, as a serious problem in Armenia. It is also a problem that USAID/Armenia has addressed in the past through health programming and recognizes as a cross-cutting issue with relevance today. Experts note that there is no law prohibiting domestic violence, and general criminal provisions and civil remedies, divorce for example, are inadequate to meet the needs of victims. The NGO sector has been instrumental in pushing for reform to address violence against women. Civil society organizations, many supported by international donors, provide vital services, such as telephone hotlines, legal and psychological counseling and shelter. Societal attitudes foster an atmosphere of stigma and shame around the issue of domestic violence, which makes women reluctant to seek help and creates a situation where perpetrators have impunity. Intermittent awareness-raising campaigns run by Armenian NGOs have had an impact on encouraging women to change their lives, but more could be done to increase the role of men as positive role models who publicly condemn violence. The recent creation of the State Interagency Committee to Combat Gender-Based Violence by the Armenian Prime Minister is a positive development that should lead to the elaboration of a national action plan on gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is a complex social problem requiring a comprehensive and long-term approach. Several general recommendations for points of intervention where USAID/Armenia could address this problem follow.

### **Recommendations:**

- Support projects to improve the litigation of domestic violence and sexual harassment cases, through both civil and criminal causes of action, and provide training and continued legal education on violence against women to male and female law students and legal professionals.
- Watchdog and monitoring activities can be used to determine how domestic violence cases are dealt with in the law enforcement and legal systems as well as whether media coverage of the topic of violence against women helps to maintain or reduce stigma.

- In enterprise-based programs, encourage the development of workplace programs against sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Further activities can be developed to improve the understanding and responsiveness of a broader spectrum of healthcare professionals (including emergency workers, gynecologists, obstetricians, family practitioners, pediatricians, nurses) to violence against women, specifically domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Health promotion messages and educational materials on healthy lifestyles aimed at both women and men should include information about gender-based violence.
- Support NGOs that provide services to victims of violence and build their capacities to address the government and advocate for reform in this area.
- Support activities that work with men against gender-based violence and promote the engagement of men as role models in this area.

## **General Considerations**

USAID/Armenia faces the challenge of how to ensure that programming in the sectors described above works toward promoting gender equality. With the commitment of Mission staff and increased awareness of implementing partners, USAID/Armenia is well placed to improve the relative status of men and women. Recent developments suggest that gender equality is entering the policy agenda of the Armenian Government, and USAID can capitalize on movement in this area. In program planning it will be useful to keep in mind several overarching issues that will lead to more effective gender integration. Going forward, fostering gender equality will result in a greater role for women in development processes but also lead to more sustainable results.

- Fostering women's economic independence is critical to their ability to realize other rights and to improving their status overall. Improving women's economic status will lead to greater advancement in other areas, for example ability to run for political office, to access legal services, healthcare and education, to leave violent situations, etc.
- Because women are virtually absent from cabinet and ministerial posts and the National Assembly, policy work with the Government of Armenia should include actions to ensure that women's interests are represented, through meetings with women's NGOs, civil society groups, engaging think tanks to conduct gender-sensitive research, etc.
- Positive measures should be taken to ensure women take part in decision-making processes in their communities, in the employment sphere and in politics. Women's participation should not be assumed but affirmative steps for women's inclusion should be a part of program design, especially in sectors that are male-dominated.
- Ensure that programming is not reinforcing prevailing stereotypes and develop projects that counter harmful gender-based stereotypes, through media campaigns and in educational settings.
- Evaluate the ability of men to access programs providing education/training and social services and citizen assistance given prevailing gender norms about masculinity in Armenia.
- Identify areas in which greater male participation can be encouraged, as partners in promoting gender equality generally, as role models against violent behavior and to enter non-traditional spheres such as teaching, service and caretaking professions.
- Ensure that needs-assessments, evaluations and research include gender considerations. Survey data should be disaggregated by sex, and gender differences should be cross-tabulated with overall findings.
- Strive for greater interaction with local civil society organizations, as well as other stakeholders, in setting priorities for women's issues in programming, procurement and evaluation.
- USAID/Armenia can play a positive role in encouraging the Armenian Government's recent efforts to establish gender equality mechanisms.

## **Organizational Issues and Recommendations**

Finally, in addition to the above recommendations, which are applicable to programming, there are some areas in which USAID/Armenia could improve the overall Mission approach to gender integration and promotion of gender equality.

- Ensure that “gender” is approached as a social construct of the roles, attributes and constraints associated with being male or female and not merely a requirement of equal participation of men and women in programs.
- Increase the capacity of USAID/Armenia and its implementing partners to undertake regular gender analysis.
- Develop expertise in gender integration within each AO team and build their capacity to interpret data and program information through a gender lens.
- Develop cross-cutting programs, as opposed to stand-alone and sector-specific programs, that will enhance women’s opportunities and status in a number of fields.
- Consider periodic trainings or meetings with implementing partners on gender integration to ensure that a common language is being used and common goals shared.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Purpose of the Assessment

In February 2010, U.S. Embassy/Yerevan completed a five-year Country Assistance Strategy (2009-2013), which USAID/Armenia further refined with four-year Assistance Objective Results Frameworks for FY2010-FY2013. The Assistance Objective Results Frameworks outline three core goals expressed as assistance objectives (AOs). Following approval of the Results Frameworks, the Mission will finalize a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), a document that will further define the results to be achieved and indicators to measure progress.

As an overarching policy, USAID strives to promote gender equality in which both men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political development; enjoy socially valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights.<sup>1</sup> USAID/Armenia likewise considers gender a cross-cutting theme to be addressed in all assistance objectives and has identified several key areas in which gender concerns could have an impact at the AO level. In order to further refine how gender issues are reflected in AO narratives and to facilitate gender integration in the Results Frameworks, the Mission considered it necessary to more closely examine the overall situation of men and women in the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter Armenia) with a view towards how such gender-related information could influence expected results.

USAID/Armenia has undertaken several initiatives in the past to improve gender integration in its programming. In 2003, the Mission carried out a gender assessment and portfolio review, and conducted basic gender integration training for Mission staff and implementing partners.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, USAID/Armenia and the USAID Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID), working with several implementers, collaborated on a workshop in 2006 to improve gender integration skills of USAID partners, Armenian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and staff of the Ministry of Health. While the focus of the training was on gender integration in reproductive and child health programming, another goal was to “operationalize [the] commitment to gender as a cross-cutting issue in program components and project activities.”<sup>3</sup>

In undertaking the current gender assessment, it was important to approach gender issues broadly, to analyze the current roles and relationships of men and women in Armenia and to determine how any differences could have either a positive or negative impact on the strategy going forward. The primary purpose of this gender assessment, therefore, is to assist the Mission to integrate gender issues into its strategic thinking, AO narratives, intermediate results and indicators as well as to provide reference information that will be available for future activity planning and design.

## 1.2. Methodology

USAID/Armenia set several tasks for the completion of this gender assessment. First, empirical information regarding critical differences in the status of men and women in Armenia today was reviewed. Second, gender considerations specific to the sectors where the Mission is currently working and plans to continue working were analyzed in order to determine whether gender differences could influence assistance objectives and intermediate results. These key findings are outlined in the present report. Finally, recommendations and guidance for integrating gender at the strategic level, in program design and in the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects were also developed. The Scope of Work is attached as Annex A to this report.

The assessment team consisted of two independent experts (Elisabeth Duban and Hasmik Gevorgyan) who conducted a desk review of key Mission and other USAID materials, revisions to the Automated Directives System (ADS) on gender integration, selected documents pertaining to current programs

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<sup>1</sup> Automated Directives System (ADS) 201.3.9.3.

<sup>2</sup> Somach, Susan D., *Gender Assessment Report & Action Plan, USAID/Armenia* (2003) (unpublished).

<sup>3</sup> Caro, Deborah A., *Gender Mainstreaming Workshop, USAID/Armenia and Project NOVA, July 11-13, 2006* (2006), p. 4.

and a range of reports, briefings and articles from other donor agencies, international organizations, NGOs and news sources.<sup>4</sup> Over a ten-day period in June 2010, the consultants met with USAID/Armenia personnel, implementing partners of current USAID programs, international organizations and several NGOs working on women's issues or conducting projects with gender components.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that USAID/Armenia requested that meetings with current implementers of USAID programs be prioritized, and so the number of additional meetings with other stakeholders was limited. Due to time limitations, all of the meetings were held in Yerevan, but a number of interviewees provided information from their programs about the situation of men and women in the various provinces, or *marzer*, of Armenia.

During the course of meetings with implementing partners, it was found that these organizations have considerable anecdotal information about gender issues in the sectors in which they work and are regularly collecting sex-disaggregated data on the participation of women and men in their activities. However, the capacity of these partner organizations to provide deeper analysis of gender impact is limited. For instance, few employ staff with expertise in gender integration, such as a gender focal point, and monitoring and evaluation experts do not seem to regularly assess the gender impact of programming. Therefore, this assessment should not preclude conducting additional sector-specific gender analysis and engaging local stakeholders from NGOs and other organizations with backgrounds in gender equality work and issues of women's rights.

### **1.3. Background**

#### **1.3.1. USAID Mission Context**

The USAID/Armenia assistance program for the period of FY2010-FY2013 is to be conducted through three assistance objectives. Each AO addresses a specific sector and will be achieved through several measurable intermediate results (IRs). A brief description of the assistance objectives follows:<sup>6</sup>

- **More Democratic Governance through Increased Civic Participation.** This AO aims to create functioning models of democratic governance at the local and national levels that are supported by informed and engaged citizens who, in turn, have improved guarantees for the protection of their rights. Activities under this AO will strengthen the institutions that effectively promote democracy in Armenia and will improve Armenia's justice sector.
- **More Competitive and Diversified Private Sector.** This AO aims to support the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as the engines of economic growth and to improve policy and management practices for key infrastructure (energy, water and telecommunications) that affect SME productivity. This AO will promote principles and technologies that support efficiency and competitiveness and decrease pollution in Armenia.
- **Improved Effectiveness of Health and Social Protection Services.** This AO aims to assist the Government of Armenia's health and human services in several areas: using financial resources more efficiently; improving the quality of services; and empowering citizens to exercise their rights to health and social protection as well as take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

At present, the Mission also supports several cross-cutting activities that are outside of the AOs described above but contribute to all the technical sectors of the overall program for Armenia.

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<sup>4</sup> A bibliography of the primary resources used for this assessment is included as Annex B to this report.

<sup>5</sup> A complete list of individuals interviewed for this assessment is included as Annex C to this report.

<sup>6</sup> *USAID Assistance Objectives and Results Frameworks for Armenia*, USAID/Armenia, 1 February 2010.

### 1.3.2. Gender Integration Requirements

In 2009, USAID made substantial revisions to the ADS with regard to required gender analysis. Gender roles and relationships must be considered at the highest level of planning, in the development of strategic plans and AOs (ADS 201.3.9.3), as well as during project and activity planning (ADS 201.3.11.6).<sup>7</sup>

Gender analysis is a process of examining the different roles, rights and opportunities of men and women as well as relations between men and women. Gender analysis identifies differences, examines why such disparities exist, determines whether they are a concern and looks at how they can be addressed. The ADS requires consideration of two questions for gender analysis:

- a. How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?
- b. How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

The first question calls for an examination of the context in which USAID will be working, an articulation of how any differences and disparities between men and women could impact the work and a determination of measures that will ensure that men and women have equal opportunities to benefit under the strategic plan and broad objectives. The second question requires testing hypotheses and assumptions about how the work itself and the planned results could have either a positive or negative effect on men and women.<sup>8</sup>

The results of gender analysis conducted at the AO, project and activity level should inform the development of performance indicators and be referred to in evaluations. The ADS requires the use of both gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when gender analysis has shown that the different roles and status of men and women will affect the planned activities and that the anticipated results will affect men and women differently. (ADS 203.3.4.3). The ADS notes that gender-sensitive indicators include both qualitative and quantitative information and should examine impact of projects on men and women at several levels (national, regional, local). In addition, AO teams are advised to be mindful of potential differential effects on men and women and to look for unintended consequences that may need to be addressed during the project.

### 1.3.3. Terminology

The ADS defines gender as “a social construct referring to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female.”<sup>9</sup> The term “gender” is distinct from the term “sex,” which refers only to biological differences that define males and females. In the work of USAID, data is generally disaggregated by sex (male or female) as this information gives an indication of gender differences.

Concepts of gender are dynamic and may change over time and differ across cultural groups or even regions. Indeed, even in a small and homogenous country such as Armenia,<sup>10</sup> notions about gender roles are neither static nor consistent. A number of interviewees for this assessment with experience working in different *marzer* of Armenia noted that attitudes about the roles of men and women vary considerably by region as well as by generation.

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<sup>7</sup> An overview of all ADS requirements on gender is included as Annex D to this report.

<sup>8</sup> Further guidance on gender analysis and integration can be found in the publication *Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Additional Help for ADS Chapters 201 and 203*, EGAT/WID, 31 March 2010, available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/201sab.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ADS Glossary.

<sup>10</sup> According to 2009 census data, the official population of Armenia is just under three million and almost 98% of the population are ethnically Armenian.

Gender integration is often considered equivalent to efforts to include women in development projects. This phenomenon is understandable as women make up a disproportionate number of the poor and disadvantaged in developing countries, and positive measures are often required to ensure equality and overcome historical injustices. In the course of this assessment, virtually all respondents tacitly understood the term “gender” to refer to women. In fact, when asked specifically for information regarding areas in which men could be affected or disadvantaged, none were articulated. By focusing solely on women when referring to “gender issues,” interviewees seemed to agree that women in Armenia are the most in need of specific initiatives to ensure they benefit fully from development projects.

At the same time, however, a considerable number of interviewees also made comparisons to the situation in other countries, pointing out that the role and position of women in Armenia is “better” than that in, for example, Iran or Afghanistan. Such respondents suggested that women actually face few disadvantages in Armenian society. It is important to understand that gender differences may not be as readily apparent in the countries of the European and Eurasian (E&E) region, such as Armenia, in which standard indicators suggest that there are few formal barriers to gender equality. Indeed, development aid in the E&E region has not emphasized traditional empowerment programs for women since indicators “such as literacy ratio between women and men and the share of women in non-agricultural wage labour, . . . suggest that gender inequalities are not as large as in other parts of the world.”<sup>11</sup> However, because “other indicators, such as employment segregation, lack of reproductive rights or occurrences of violence against women, show the alarming extent of women’s human rights violations in these countries,”<sup>12</sup> non-discrimination should not be assumed and careful gender analysis is necessary.

This gender assessment focuses on the status of women in Armenia today, where women face barriers to equality and how their role can be enhanced in order to bring about change, including democratic and economic reform, in their country. Distinct spheres in which men may be disadvantaged, especially with regard to the constraints on males that result from strong patriarchal traditions, are also examined in this report.

## **2. BACKGROUND ON ARMENIA**

Armenia is a small and mountainous county located at the crossroads of the East and West. Armenians take great pride in their ancient history and rich culture especially the fact that their country was the first to formally adopt Christianity in the early Fourth century. Armenia has enjoyed periods of autonomy but has also been ruled and influenced by some of the dominant empires in history, including the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols, Ottoman Turks and Russians. Armenian history has numerous examples of equal opportunities provided to men and women in society. From ancient times, women actively participated in the political, economic, religious and artistic life of the country. For instance, by the 9<sup>th</sup> century daughters had legal rights equal to sons in the inheritance of property as well as in property ownership; 12<sup>th</sup> century legal practice prohibited husbands from using physical violence against wives and allowed women to initiate divorce.<sup>13</sup>

Recent Armenian history is marked by several tragic events that have impacted the country as a whole. During the First World War, Armenia was caught between the Ottoman and Russian Empires, and when Turkey instituted a policy of forced resettlement in the Western part of Armenia, combined with arrests, repression and mass-killings, the result was the death of an estimated one million Armenians, migration and the loss of historical territory. The remaining Eastern part of the country first came under Russian and then Soviet power in 1922.

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<sup>11</sup> Clark, Cindy, Sprenger, Ellen and VeneKlasen, Lisa, *Where Is the Money for Women’s Rights? Assessing the Resources and the Role of Donors in the Promotion of Women’s Rights and the Support of Women’s Rights Organizations*, Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), (2006), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Gevorgyan, Hasmik, *Gender Issues: Problems and Solutions, Methodology for Gender Education*, Trust Social Work and Sociological Research Center, (2001), pp. 34-38.

The Soviet approach to gender equality was specific and had a profound effect on women's rights in Armenia. The Soviet Union had an official policy of gender equality, and during Soviet rule women were strongly encouraged to participate actively in the professional, social and political life of the country. Even though one of the reasons for women's emancipation was to increase the qualified



labor force in a weak economy, these policies lead to positive changes in legislation and improvement in the social status of women through positive discrimination and affirmative action. Legal protections, however, did not necessarily bring about a change in underlying attitudes. The new Soviet woman had an increased role in society, but gender roles at home remained unchanged. The “double burden” of

Soviet women, considered responsible for both work outside the home and an unequal share of housework, has been well documented. It has also been suggested that the existence of strong laws that granted women equal rights precluded the emergence of a feminist movement as happened in Western countries where women struggled for their basic rights. In addition, the Soviet countries had no practice of monitoring whether gender equality had been achieved in reality, the result of which can be seen in Armenia today where most people state that men and women are equal despite evidence of considerable disparities.

An earthquake struck northern Armenia in 1988 causing the deaths of at least 25,000 people and leaving many more homeless or disabled. Occurring at a time when the Soviet Union was experiencing severe shortages, international humanitarian aid was requested. It has been contended, however, that due to corruption much of the aid did not reach the victims. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region escalated into armed conflict. The conflict ultimately resulted in Armenia gaining control over a portion of the territory but also an influx of refugees and an economic blockade by Azerbaijan, later joined by Turkey that continues to this day. Negotiations with Turkey over reopening the border continue. While a cease-fire has been in place since 1994, Armenians still express feelings that two potentially hostile neighbors border their country. This sense of threatened conflict may well also maintain the “masculine” culture that dominates Armenian politics and the economic sphere.



The Soviet legacy continues to have an effect on the development of the country. The fall of the Soviet Union was followed by a period in which Armenian society rejected much that was considered “Soviet” in nature, whether a positive achievement or a failure. In the absence of a legal environment to protect women's rights combined with non-reinforcement of Soviet principles of equality, many reverted to traditional views and customs that were often at odds with notions of gender equality. The social construct of gender equality acquired over 70 years of Soviet rule was largely considered erroneous and was abandoned.

The influence of the Armenian Diaspora during this period should not be overlooked. Financial support along with different ideologies began to flow into the country from both the West – with its strong Diaspora in the United States and Europe – as well as from the East, which supports a large Armenian community in the Middle East. Armenian women were quicker to accept Western values, concepts and ideas and are perceived as more flexible and open to learning new skills and languages, traits that have become essential during the post-Soviet period. In contrast, Armenian men more

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comfortably adopted patriarchal and traditional views and roles, influenced by the East. Notions of masculinities and a rigid view of men's role and responsibilities in society, however, are not always beneficial to men themselves as they correlate with risk-taking behaviors, limited help-seeking and pressure to appear successful and powerful. A more detailed discussion of gender roles follows in the section on below on findings.

In this context, the country struggles to identify its traditional and cultural roots, divorced from its Soviet past, but also encompassing both Western and Eastern views and even contradictory notions about gender relations in society. Weaknesses in Armenia's economic, political and social support systems affect both men and women, but prevailing social and cultural stereotypes and conventional gender roles often place women in a further disadvantaged position.

## **2.1. State Institutions, Laws and Policies for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality**

The Government of Armenia has undertaken important commitments to improve the status of women in the country. Beginning soon after independence, Armenia became a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>14</sup> and has to date submitted four periodic reports on efforts to realize the convention.<sup>15</sup> Following the Fourth World Conference on Women,<sup>16</sup> the government established several institutions for the advancement of women and improvement of women's lives, with an emphasis on issues of motherhood. In 1997, the Department of Family, Women's and Children's Issues was created within the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (formerly the Ministry of Social Security). This Department was responsible for developing the first National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for 1998-2000 which "focused on the issues of mother and child health protection, women's rights and fundamental freedoms, and provision of guarantees for their increased involvement in public administration."<sup>17</sup> A Deputy Minister post was later created within the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues with a supervisory function over the abovementioned Department as well as responsibilities for coordinating "women-related activities" of the other ministries and collaboration with NGOs. A Division on the Protection of Mother and Child Health also exists within the Ministry of Health.

In 2000, Armenia joined the UN Millennium Declaration and committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015, including Goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women). The low level of women in political office has been designated the primary obstacle to achieving Goal 3, and thus nationalized MDG targets focus solely on increasing women's participation in political decision-making.<sup>18</sup>

Also in 2000, the Prime Minister established the interagency Council on Women's Affairs, an advisory body tasked with coordinating efforts to resolve problems affecting women and ensuring women's equality. The principle function of the Council on Women's Affairs has been to formulate gender policies and ensure women's representation in governance and decision-making.<sup>19</sup> Council members include representatives of governmental agencies and NGOs, women from media and the business sector. A respondent to this assessment characterized the members of the Council on Women's Affairs as representing the "old guard" and not those currently working in the field on women's rights and thus the Council has not been an effective agency for change.

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<sup>14</sup> Ratified in 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Armenia's combined third and fourth periodic report was submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in December 2007 and reviewed at the 43<sup>rd</sup> session in January 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Held in Beijing, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> *Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)*, submitted by the Republic of Armenia, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/ARMENIA-English.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Millennium Development Goals: Nationalization and Progress*, 2005 National Report for Armenia, available at <http://www.un.am/?laid=1&com=module&module=static&id=361>.

<sup>19</sup> Osipov, Vladimir and Sargizova, Jina, *National Machinery and Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality*, extract from *Monitoring of the Implementation of CEDAW, BPfA, MDG and NAP*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), (2006), (non-official translation).

The Council on Women's Affairs, however, was instrumental in the development of the current National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for 2004-2010. The present Action Plan outlines several critical sectors in which women face particular difficulties, including decision-making, the economy, education, health, violence against women and mass media,<sup>20</sup> but it also presents a limited understanding of gender equality. Despite covering broad themes, the National Action Plan is still based on notions of women as mothers and emphasizes women's responsibility for family duties while suggesting that activities outside of the home would have to be reconciled with these obligations. The preamble to the National Plan states that the document "conceives [of] women as individuals, women, and mothers, and pursues the approach of not countering family with the professional or social and political activities of a woman, but rather, one of developing conditions for the fully-fledged realization of women's potential in both employment and families."<sup>21</sup> The National Action plan reiterates the "natural" differences between men and women and characterizes gender inequality as arising not from national traditions but "the present social-economic situation and the low level of civilization in some groups of society."

The adoption of the National Action Plan was not followed with financial resources or national machinery for its implementation. Furthermore, although the current Plan is due to expire at the end of 2010, it does not appear that the government has conducted monitoring or evaluation of progress since 2004. An assessment of institutional mechanisms for gender equality found that those who were responsible for implementing the Plan both in Yerevan and the regions were "almost entirely unaware ... of the content of the National Action Plan [and] also of the responsibilities assigned to the Ministries and Regional Governors' Offices by Decision of the Armenian Prime Minister."<sup>22</sup> In addition, 18 months after the Plan's adoption, no single region, town or city had developed local action plans to implement the national goals in line with community priorities.<sup>23</sup> Of the 57 measures included in the National Plan, to be implemented by ministries and NGOs, four were to be financed by the State, 20 required no financial resources and the remaining 33 were to be implemented by international organizations within their budgets.<sup>24</sup> An expert interviewed for this assessment stated that many of the individual lines of the Action Plan have still not received funding, and even those that did not require funds, have not been fully carried out.

During this assessment process, several respondents noted that an overall lack of political will to address gender inequalities and discrimination prevents progress in this area. Others commented that the government considers improving the status of women as lower in priority to other "more pressing" concerns, such as resolving the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, dealing with Turkey or establishing democracy. One expert stated that in official reports on progress toward improving the status of women, it is the efforts of Armenian NGOs and donor organizations that are elaborated.

Quite recently, however, the Government of Armenia has taken positive steps that suggest a more serious intention to address gender issues as well as a shift in perspective, from one of improving the lives of women as mothers, to one of addressing barriers to gender equality as a way to improve the status of women. In 2009, the President of Armenia initiated the creation of a Public Council with representation of leading political and NGO figures to serve as an advisory body to the government. One of the Public Council committees is dedicated to Gender and Demographics. Later that year, the Speaker of the National Assembly announced a plan to establish an inter-party consultative body on equal rights and opportunities for women and men.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps most significantly, in February 2010, the Prime Minister approved the Gender Policy Concept Paper, which is the first national-level statement of policy and strategy on equality between men and women in Armenia.

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<sup>20</sup> See *2004-2010 Republic of Armenia National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society*, available at <http://www.genderbasedviolence.am/en/content/show/55/national-documents-on-gender-and-gbv.html>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Osipov, Vladimir and Sargizova, Jina, *National Machinery and Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Implementation of the UN Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women for the Period 2002- 2007*, Democracy Today/All Armenian Union of Women, (2008), p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> See *Inter-Party Advisory Body on Women's Issues Adjunct to RA NA Speaker*, 17 December 2009, available at [http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat\\_id=2&NewsID=3695&year=2009&month=12&day=17&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat_id=2&NewsID=3695&year=2009&month=12&day=17&lang=eng).

The Concept Paper outlines the primary goals of achieving gender equality in all spheres of life; ensuring equal representation of women and men in decision-making; overcoming discrimination on the basis of sex; creating equal opportunities for women and men to benefit from labor and employment; and supporting a political culture that includes gender dialog.<sup>26</sup> The Concept Paper is expected to form the basis of a strategic program, a Gender Policy Action Plan for 2011-2015, and also sets forth the task of submitting a draft law “*On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*” to the National Assembly for approval.<sup>27</sup>

Other positive initiatives to address particularly severe expressions of gender equality, such as the inclusion of a quota for women in political parties and the establishment of a National Interagency Committee to Combat Gender-Based Violence in March 2010, are discussed in detail in the sections below on Findings.

Department on Family, Women’s and Children’s Issues, Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (established 1997)	established 1997
National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women’s Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society	1998-2000
Council on Women’s Affairs	established 2000
National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society	2004-2010
Gender Policy Concept Paper	2010
<i>Law “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women.” (draft)</i>	
<i>Gender Policy Action Plan</i>	Anticipated 2011-2015

During the course of this assessment, it was noted that Armenia’s membership in the Council of Europe (CoE) is politically important for the country. Armenia became a full member of the CoE in January 2001 and ratified the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the European Convention on Human Rights), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.<sup>28</sup> Within its broad mandate to promote human rights among Member States, the CoE promotes equality between women and men, regularly makes recommendations towards the achievement of gender equality and monitors progress among Member States. The CoE recognizes violence against women as a serious obstacle to equality and the importance of balanced participation in political and public decision-making in a pluralist democracy. The Council of Europe, through the Committee of Ministers, has also issued recommendations on combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. While Armenia is represented on the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men, an intergovernmental body, it is not clear to what extent European gender equality policy is generally known or relied upon by policy-makers at the national or local level.

<sup>26</sup> *Concept Paper Gender Policy*, Annex to Protocol No.5 of the RA Government, 11 February 2010, available at <http://www.genderbasedviolence.am/en/content/show/55/national-documents-on-gender-and-gbv.html>.

<sup>27</sup> See also, *Выступление Г-жи Джеммы Багдасарян, Главы Делегации Республики Армения [Statement by Ms. Jemma Bagdasaryan, Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia]*, 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (Beijing +15), 1-12 March 2010, available at [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/general\\_discussion/ARMENIA.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/general_discussion/ARMENIA.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Article 14, Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

## 2.2. Donors and International Organizations Addressing Gender Equality

A full mapping of donor efforts to improve gender equality in Armenia is beyond the scope of the present assessment, but nevertheless it should be noted that several international and donor organizations fund and implement projects targeting Armenian women. The United Nations, European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and European bi-lateral donors are all mandated to mainstream gender in their programming, but few donors are currently supporting projects that address women's empowerment on a large scale. Most focus on specific spheres in which women are disadvantaged and, with the exception of small grants to organizations that work with sexual minorities, none appear to be addressing gender issues that uniquely affect men. The United Nations addresses such topics as reproductive health/family planning and gender-based violence, through the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and the achievement of the MDG, through the UN Development Program (UNDP). The OSCE Office in Yerevan is concentrating on women's economic empowerment through the organization of three women's resource centers in the Syunik Region. The EU is funding the three-year Empowering Young Women program, which targets women between 17 and 25 from socially vulnerable backgrounds.<sup>29</sup> The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) operates the TAM/BAS (TurnAround Management and Business Advisory Service) program in Armenia to provide direct assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises, which includes the Women in Business program to promote female entrepreneurship.<sup>30</sup>

The British Council, funded by the British Embassy, supports the Wo/Men in Politics program to increase the effectiveness of Armenian women in politics through capacity building for women leaders and public awareness projects.<sup>31</sup> The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds projects on gender-based violence.<sup>32</sup> The German development corporation- GTZ- approaches gender integration much in the manner of USAID. At present, most of projects being managed by GTZ in Armenia are classified as "G1," meaning men and women should benefit equally during implementation but there is no specific goal to address gender issues. Despite the range of projects carried out by several donors, it was also noted that the international community as a whole does not view gender issues as a priority in the region and that some donors are now focusing on other issues.

A number of respondents to this assessment noted the need for better donor coordination on gender-related work, to develop joint strategies, to avoid duplicating efforts and inconsistent approaches when working in the same fields and to work with the Armenian Government as future action plans are drafted. At present, the UN Country Team in Armenia and OSCE are leading an effort to support efforts to mainstream gender as a cross-cutting theme in development work by establishing a Gender Theme Group, chaired by the two organizations and a representative from the Government of Armenia. In mid-July a first meeting of the Gender Theme Group (GTG) was convened to adopt terms of reference. The stated purpose of the GTG is to promote gender mainstreaming in the activities of development partners, to track gender equality throughout assistance frameworks, to promote a deeper understanding and commitment to gender-responsive development programming and to create a venue for regular sharing of information, experience and tools on implementing gender equality in Armenia.<sup>33</sup> The GTG will next meet in October 2010 to discuss a draft work plan.

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<sup>29</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/projects/list\\_of\\_projects/163543\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/projects/list_of_projects/163543_en.htm).

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.ebrd.net/pages/workingwithus/tambas/priorities/wib.shtml>.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.britishcouncil.org/armenia-science-society-women-in-politics.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> See [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/Sikkerhetspol/Prosjekter/Armenia\\_2009.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/Sikkerhetspol/Prosjekter/Armenia_2009.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> *Gender Theme Group in Armenia Terms of Reference*, UN Country Team in Armenia, (2010), (provided by OSCE Office in Yerevan).

### 3. FINDINGS ON GENDER IN ARMENIA

#### 3.1. Gender Roles and Tradition in Armenia

During the course of this assessment, people made frequent references to Armenian culture and tradition to explain gender norms, such as women's limited public role and men's responsibility to support their families financially. The sources of such culture and tradition, however, were not clarified. As described above, Soviet ideology officially recognized equality between men and women and there are examples of women's important role dating to the early days of Armenia history. It was also observed that there is no uniform culture in Armenia, with some *marzer* exhibiting considerably more conservative attitudes than others. Similarly, there was disagreement over how the new generation, those who were born after independence, understand the roles of men and women. While some noted that youth exhibit more conservative notions about the role of women, others contended that young people view gender roles less rigidly than their parents and grandparents.

On the whole, however, there is evidence that societal views of the "appropriate" roles for men and women are quite rigid and influenced by patriarchal traditions. An Armenian proverb states, "A woman is the internal walls of a house and man- the external." Men are usually considered the head of the household and take on the role of working outside the home to support the family. Women are responsible for maintaining the home and childcare. As one study puts it, "for men, gainful employment is accepted as being the highest priority" while for women, "[h]ousework comes first and gainful employment has to make way. Gainful employment does not 'release' women from housework to the same extent as it does men."<sup>34</sup> Time use studies confirm that women spent five times more time on housework or other unpaid work than men (almost 6 hours per day for women as opposed to under two hours for men).<sup>35</sup> While respondents mentioned that men seem to be taking on more responsibility for childcare, this may be an exception. Research into perceptions of masculinity found that divisions of labor in the family are strictly defined and that tasks considered "feminine," such as cooking, cleaning, washing dishes or laundry are seen as unacceptable for men.<sup>36</sup> The notion that men are usually breadwinners seems to influence decisions around hiring and promotion, but it is not reflective of the fact that women head almost a third of Armenian households.<sup>37</sup> Men are also perceived as decision-makers in the public sphere, and it was reported that female politicians must take on a "masculine" manner and adopt male values in order to succeed.

Such notions of gender norms impact the everyday lives of both women and men. Decisions are often based on stereotypes rather than objective qualifications, for example in hiring, promotion, elected office and even the choice of service providers. Women are said to lack confidence in their own leadership abilities and because they have not been socialized to see themselves in roles of authority, they avoid competition with men in both the political and business arenas. Women regard themselves as dependent on men (primarily relatives) in politics and the economic sphere and rely little on other women in public life.<sup>38</sup> This viewpoint explains why women and women's groups do not appear to be supportive of one another and at times are uncooperative. Such traditional views also lead women to accept discrimination as a "normal" part of life.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Petrosyan, Hrachya, *Unpaid Work and gender inequality in Armenia*, Levy Economics Institute/ Bureau for Development Policy of UNDP, (2005), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-5.

<sup>36</sup> Gevorgyan, Hasmik and Melumyan, Yuliana, *Masculinity and Femininity in the Armenian Context*, Trust Social Work and Sociological Research Center, (2008).

<sup>37</sup> *Survey on "Family" as an Institution*, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of RA/ National Statistical Service of RA, (2006), p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Wistrand, Birgitta, *Women empowerment and cooperation in Armenia with a focus on the Syunik region*, OSCE Office in Yerevan, (2007), pp. 13, 14.

<sup>39</sup> *Implementation of the UN Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women for the Period 2002- 2007*, Democracy Today/All Armenian Union of Women, p. 4.

On the positive side, women are described as more flexible and socially adaptive. The majority of implementers mentioned women's greater role in development work, both as employees of international and donor organizations and as participants in development activities. Women's greater participation in such training and other activities is, of course, important but it should not be viewed simply as an indicator of success. Such efforts seem not to have increased women's access to real power over important decisions for the county and, indeed, may reinforce a stereotype that women take part in such voluntary and social projects in place of governance. Overall, gender roles limit women in achieving their full potentials and to act as agents of positive change in the country.

Masculine identity in Armenia is closely linked to public perceptions of status and power. It was noted by several respondents that men are far less likely to attend training and skill-building courses, use telephone hotlines, seek assistance from citizen service centers, address primary care physicians or report incidents of corruption. This situation may be in part reflective of the fact that men in Armenia have informal networks through which to resolve problems, but it is undoubtedly also tied to an unwillingness to appear weak or in need of assistance. Cultural definitions of masculinity in Armenia are closely connected to men's risk-taking and unhealthy behavior choices, such as abuse of alcohol and drugs, practicing unsafe sex and even reluctance to use seat belts.

While the norm of the male leader has benefitted men greatly, it has also precluded them from other sectors, such as primary school education, where they could play valuable roles as mentors and examples for the younger generation. A study of the impact of the lack of men in the teaching profession, combined with absent fathers who have migrated for work, suggests that boys in particular have few opportunities to observe, question and challenge their notions of what constitutes male qualities and therefore may face problems with "misconceptions and misinterpretations of masculinity."<sup>40</sup> The lack of male role models has been linked to boys' poorer academic performance at school, as compared to girls, higher school dropout rates and juvenile delinquency.<sup>41</sup> Unemployment also presents a particularly heavy psychological burden for men when they feel unable to support their families. Lastly, men have not entered the public discourse on gender equality probably due to misconceptions that it concerns only women and perhaps also not recognizing their own potential to gain from a more equal society.

## **3.2. Democracy and Governance**

Significant obstacles still prevent Armenia's transition to a fully functional and representational democracy. For example, the 2008 Presidential election, while largely considered by observers to be in line with international standards, resulted in protests by members of the opposition that were received with violence and suppression. Political offices are characterized as belonging to the wealthy and powerful. Corruption remains endemic and pervades the lives of ordinary citizens, creating an atmosphere of injustice. Such problems, as well as weaknesses in the rule of law and lack of citizen involvement in policy decisions, negatively affect the lives of both men and women. There are, however, important differences in the abilities of women and men to engage in democratic processes in Armenia, to raise issues of their concern and to access justice to redress violations of their rights.

### **3.2.1. Political Participation and Governance**

One indicator of a functional democracy is the ability of all citizens, both men and women, to contribute to the country's governance, either through political office or by having their interests represented by elected officials. Perhaps one of the most striking indicators of gender inequality in Armenia is the very low numbers of women in political office- a fact mentioned by virtually all respondents to this assessment. Although women make up just over half of the population, are well educated and participate freely as voters in elections, they are vastly underrepresented in decision-making and policy development in both elected offices and political appointments.

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<sup>40</sup> See, generally, Martirosyan, Mariam, *Lack of Adult Male Role Models in Secondary Schools of Armenia and its Impact on Armenian Male Teenagers' Conceptualizations of Masculinities*, Final Analytical Report, Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC)- Armenia, (2008).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid and Hashmi, Jodut, *Boys' Declining Access to School in Armenia*, Paper 3: Out of School Children Paper Series, UNICEF.

Comparing the numbers of women in elected offices at both the national level and in bodies of local self-governance demonstrates that women in Armenia hold fewer than 10% of elected posts. As one analyst notes “in the [Republic of Armenia], in its decision making process, 52% of the majority only has 9% representation.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Zadoyan, Karen. *The Current State of Affairs Regarding Political Equality for Men and Women in Armenia*, Armenian Young Lawyers Association, (2007), available at <http://www.ayla.am/info/eng/publications/KZadoyan2.htm>.

**Table 2: Women in elected office (2010, 2008)<sup>43</sup>**

	<b>Total seats/posts</b>	<b>Number of women</b>	<b>Proportion of women</b>
<b>National Assembly</b>	131	11	8.3%
<b>Mayors (urban)</b>	48	0	0
<b>Municipal Community Councils (urban)</b>	539	23	4.2%
<b>Mayors (rural)</b>	866	23	2.7%
<b>Municipal Community Councils (rural)</b>	5,188	336	6.5%

Since independence in 1991, the numbers of female Members of Parliament (MPs) has fluctuated, not demonstrating a clear increasing trend. Since the first convocation of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia in 1995, women have never achieved higher than 9% representation among deputies.<sup>44</sup> Of all women holding seats in Parliament, most have been elected through proportional vote, and the number of female MPs elected by majority vote has never been higher than 3% (in 2007, no women were elected by majority vote).<sup>45</sup>

An increase in the number of women deputies elected by proportional vote in 2007 has been attributed to an amendment to the Electoral Code, which raised an existing quota for women on political party lists from 5% to 15%.<sup>46</sup> Of note, women activists had lobbied for a higher but balanced gender quota of 25% (referring to either women or men),<sup>47</sup> but as it was considered necessary to increase the membership of women in Parliament, a system was adopted by which “women shall make at least 15% of the people included in a party’s electoral list for National Assembly elections under proportional system; moreover, at least every tenth person in a list shall be a woman.”<sup>48</sup>

In the 2007 election cycle, the quota aided in increasing the numbers of women on political party lists from 14.2% (2003) to 22.6%, but experts concluded that, in fact, the quota “merely reflected the already existing reality and was virtually unable to result in a significant increase of women’s presence in the Parliament.”<sup>49</sup>

The goal of the quota system, to increase female MPs to at least 15%, has been easily circumvented. In the 2007 election cycle, “numerous violations” of the Election Code requirement that every tenth person on election lists be a woman were present in nearly all the political parties’ proportional lists.<sup>50</sup> Respondents to this assessment explained that the Party Chairman controls placement on party lists and women are often listed at the end. Furthermore, corruption in the system means that high payment is exacted for positions high on party lists, and therefore wealthy male candidates generally fill these spots. In reality when seats become free, women are not able to fill them; and seats once filled by female MPs are not necessarily replaced with other women politicians. In other cases, women have

<sup>43</sup> Data on numbers of female Members of Parliament obtained from the official website for the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, accessed July 2010, <http://www.parliament.am/deputies.php?lang=eng>. Data on other elected officials for 2008 from *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, (2009).

<sup>44</sup> Zadoyan, Karen, *The Current State of Affairs Regarding Political Equality for Men and Women in Armenia*.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Aslanyan, Svetlana, *A Gender Analysis of the European Union Developmental Aid for Armenia*, EU-CIS Gender Watch, Network of East-West Women/CDCS, (2008).

<sup>47</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), (2007), p. 28.

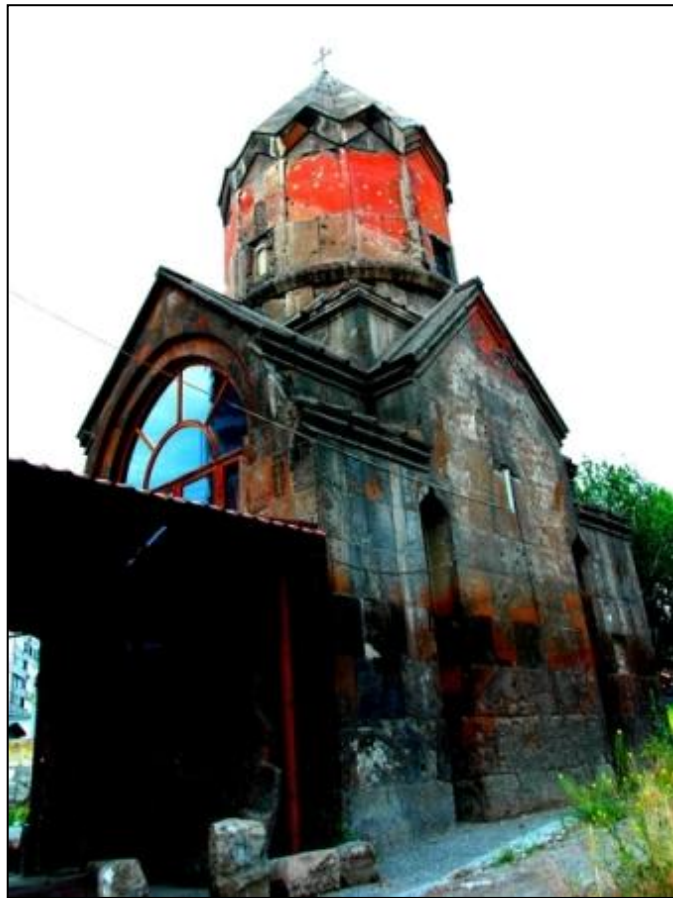
<sup>48</sup> Article 100(2), Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>49</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE).

<sup>50</sup> Zadoyan, Karen, *The Current State of Affairs Regarding Political Equality for Men and Women in Armenia*, Armenian Young Lawyers Association, (2007).

been nominated to take positions in the National Assembly, but they have ultimately stepped down or found new employment in government posts. Lack of political will explains the ineffective quota, as difficulty finding women candidates has not been identified as an issue.<sup>51</sup> On average, women account for around 40% of party members and mostly carrying out administrative work and rarely occupying leadership positions.<sup>52</sup>

The Gender Policy Concept Paper recognizes the limited impact of the current quota system and calls for amending the Electoral Code and setting a 30% quota, following a Council of Europe recommendation for a 40% “quantitative parity threshold” for men and women in order to gradually improve women’s representation in the highest and chief positions at all levels of the executive branch. Experts have also recommended a more progressive “zebra system” by which every fifth party member is a woman. At present, the National Assembly has agreed tentatively to a one in ten system, essentially that which is already required by the Electoral Code.



It is often the case that women hold more elected offices at the local government level, but in Armenia women are almost absent from decision-making here too. In fact, it was noted that the numbers of women on community councils, municipal self-governing bodies, has decreased since 2005 despite the fact that there were considerably more female candidates running in 2008. It proved impossible to find current statistics on the numbers of women on community councils in 2010, but information from respondents that work at the community level with council members suggest that there are fewer today than official data from 2008 indicates. At present, there are no female mayors and only one deputy mayor of the 48 urban areas. It should be noted that the representation of women in local office varies considerably by *marz*, city and village, but overall women have little access to these policy-making posts.

Respondents to this assessment identified a number of barriers to women holding political office,<sup>53</sup> some related to women’s lower economic status and lack of finance resources generally and others related to a cultural norm that politics and even decision-making are considered a “man’s business.” Indeed, as discussed in the section on media below, women are not generally depicted or thought of as leaders in the public sphere. The nature of politics itself, and associations with corruption and “dirty PR,” also makes this an unpopular choice for women, many of whom do not want to enter into competition with men. Women often lack confidence in their own abilities to lead, are underrepresented in sectors where recruiting for politics takes place and have less access to support networks and other avenues to gain leadership skills.

<sup>51</sup> Hasratyan, Jemma, Hovnatanyan, Tamara, Zakaryan, Lilit and Armaganova, Gayane, *Women’s Political Participation in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Armenia*, OSCE/ Armenian Association of Women with University Education, (2007), p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> See Hasratyan, Jemma et al., *Women’s Political Participation in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Armenia* for a more detailed analysis of obstacles to women’s political participation.

Women view their reasons for wanting to enter politics as different from men's. Women report that they desire to have their voices heard, to make government policies more humane and to change social conditions, but they see men's motivation as more pragmatic- to build a career, achieve power and, specifically, to position themselves as MPs to gain immunity and protection for private business interests.<sup>54</sup> Societal readiness to elect women is difficult to gauge. A 2004 survey of citizen perceptions found that when asked to rank where it was "most important" for women to be involved in social life, the majority chose the areas of family, education and health care. Less than one in ten Armenians thought that women should be involved in government (national or local) or business.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, the majority also thought it important that women be involved in "political events" and 73% of those surveyed said that they would be "very or somewhat likely" to vote for a female political candidate if she were equally qualified as a man.<sup>56</sup>

Women's representation in appointed positions, among executive and local offices, is only marginally better than in elected posts.

**Table 3: Women in appointed positions (2010, 2008)<sup>57</sup>**

	Total positions	Number of women	Proportion of women
<b>Ministers</b> <sup>58</sup>	19	2	10.5%
<b>Deputy Ministers</b>	56	4	7.1%
<b>Head of Marz</b>	10	1	10.0%
<b>Deputy Head of Marz</b>	21	1	4.8%

Despite their low numbers in positions of authority within government structures, women are well represented among government staff. For example in 2008, women made up 54% of government and 44% of ministerial staff,<sup>59</sup> and 46% of municipal staff in urban areas and 42% in rural areas.<sup>60</sup> As was in the case in the Soviet period, women hold subordinate positions in the government where they are responsible for administrative work but not political decision-making.

The absence of women from positions of political authority seems to have had an impact on policy decisions. The National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society for 2004-2010 prescribes gender expertise of legislation, but respondents to this assessment who work on policy reform were unable to recall such analysis being applied to changes to recent laws. Likewise, gender implications are not a part of budget decisions at either the national or local level. An assessment of Ministerial programs in 2008 for their gender sensitivity found that of 308 programs, 83 had either some (direct or indirect) or strong gender orientation, the majority of which were implemented by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Labor and Social Issues.<sup>61</sup> These programs were allocated 6.6% of the total ministerial expenditures. A closer examination of the five programs with the highest expenditures (90.5% of the total budget for programs with some gender orientation) reveals that they focused on obstetric and gynecological care, pediatric medical care and allowances and social benefits for children.<sup>62</sup> While such programs play an important role in assisting women and mothers, they also indicate a narrow understanding of how laws and social policies may have a differential impact on women and men.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> *Citizens' Awareness and Participation in Armenia Survey 2004*, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), (2004), p. 35.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>57</sup> Data on numbers of female Ministers and Deputy Ministers obtained from the official website for the Government of the Republic of Armenia, accessed July 2010, <http://www.gov.am/en/structure/>. Data on other appointed officials for 2008 from *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, (2009).

<sup>58</sup> Including the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>59</sup> Aslanyan, Svetlana, *A Gender Analysis of the European Union Developmental Aid for Armenia*.

<sup>60</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>61</sup> *Gender Responsive Budget and Gender State in Armenia*, Paper 01(10), Economic Development and Research Center (EDRC), (2010), p. 69.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

### 3.2.2. Civil Society Groups Addressing Women's Issues

In contrast to women's absence from public office, Armenian women have a more significant role as leaders of non-governmental organizations. While there is a common perception that women dominate the third sector, in fact, of the thousands of NGOs officially registered in Armenia, experts estimate that there are about 700 active organizations, 60 of which could be considered "women's NGOs."<sup>63</sup> However, women's contribution to civil society in Armenia is one of their most publicly visible roles, and this may explain the overestimation of their numbers and influence. NGOs led by women are those that provide social support and services, those that address issues of specific concern for women, such as domestic violence, and others that work towards gender mainstreaming and gender equality. A survey of civil society in Armenia shows that women's NGOs work in four main areas: "socio-political issues and protection of women's rights and interests; promotion of women's business and professional activities; provision of social services and charity and elimination of violence against women."<sup>64</sup>

There are several reasons for women's greater representation in the third sector. First, running an NGO has not been perceived as a competitive source of income or a way of attaining higher social status, and thus women have faced little competition from men in this arena. Second, the mission of a large proportion of NGOs concerns charitable work and assisting underprivileged people. In Armenia, women have traditionally undertaken such activities as part of their social role. Finally, during the transition period, both cultural norms and business regulations restricted women's participation in the private sector, while the non-profit sector gave women an outlet for engaging in the social and economic life of their communities and country. Indeed most USAID partners interviewed for this assessment drew particular attention to women's activism in their community based-projects, for example as members of community health groups, civic action groups, youth clubs and community committees. While such activism should not be discouraged, the limitations of such groups, which are informal (meaning, not registered NGOs) and consist of volunteers, should also be kept in mind.

Civil society as a whole, and particularly women's NGOs, shows some weaknesses. Several experts noted that women's groups in Armenia have been unable to consolidate and form a movement but work in isolation and in some cases are even uncooperative. During the course of this assessment, no coalitions of women's activists were discovered. Because of this situation, women's NGOs have not formed a united body, or critical mass, as a prerequisite for change and advancing a common agenda.<sup>65</sup>

The Government of Armenia does collaborate with women's NGOs, most notably on the Council on Women's Affairs, through the Public Council and the Interagency Committee to Combat Gender-Based Violence. A USAID partner explained that in some municipalities the mayor's office works closely with local NGOs that have expertise in community organizing and communication with constituents, and in one case a women's NGO received municipal funds for this joint work. At a more local level, individual NGOs have formed good working relationships and social partnerships with, for example, educational institutions and the police. NGO and government cooperation varies by issue, however. One respondent, speaking specifically on the issue of violence against women, expressed frustration that the government rarely relies on local NGOs that have over a decade of experience in this field.

NGOs have minimal influence on policy decisions and are not generally considered forces for social change. Even women leaders of NGOs estimate their impact on reform processes as marginal and many choose to avoid addressing political issues.<sup>66</sup> A respondent to this assessment also stated that

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<sup>63</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), p. 41.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Wistrand, Birgitta, *Women empowerment and cooperation in Armenia with a focus on the Syunik region*, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), p. 42.

the NGO sector as a whole takes an *ad hoc* and reactive approach to addressing rights violations and inequality- rather than undertaking consistent monitoring or observation of systemic problems, such as could form the basis of advocacy initiatives and legislative or policy change. It was also noted that civil society usually serves an important role as a counterbalance to the power structures, but in Armenia this function of NGOs is not yet well understood.

Competition among women's NGOs is connected to scarcity of resources, as most such civil society organizations are heavily reliant on grants from international organizations. Some NGOs offering critical services, such as to victims of violence, have struggled to operate their offices when grants have ended. A number of women NGO leaders have years of experience working in civil society, but in the current Armenian context they have few options to advance in their professional lives and move to other sectors. Whereas one might expect to see NGO leaders in other countries moving into leadership positions in government, in policy-making institutions or the private sector as a normal step in career advancement, in Armenia these avenues are male-dominated and severely limited for women. In the current climate, NGO leaders do not necessarily regard government office as legitimate and, as mentioned above, the minimal impact of civil society does not lead to public confidence in their leadership abilities.

### 3.2.3. Media and Gender Issues

Mass media plays a key role in shaping public opinion and can also be used as a powerful tool in countering gender-based stereotypes. Media monitoring conducted in 2004 in eight former Soviet countries, including Armenia, indicated that women's opinions were largely absent from the press.<sup>67</sup> Only 4% of commentary on Armenian domestic policy matters reported in the press was attributed to a woman, a fact partly explained by the small numbers of women in political office. In all countries except Armenia, the opposition press was more likely to report women's views. In Armenia, opposition newspapers were found to be more conservative than the official press. When the media did include women's comments they were foremost related to issues of "family and parenting, social services, education, health, culture, art and show business."<sup>68</sup> The study found several situations in which women's opinions were reported in the press: when there was no other choice in commentator; when a woman had "unquestioned authority" in a particular area; in "seasonal" articles connected to the activities of international organizations or women's NGOs; or in pieces disparaging of feminism.<sup>69</sup> A few interviewees noted that articles and broadcasts about women typically appear during the month that is dedicated to honoring women in Armenia, from International Women's Day (March 8) to the Day of Motherhood and Beauty (April 7).

Respondents to the present assessment confirmed that overall the media does not portray women in positions of authority or as decision-makers, says little about issues of concern to women and perpetuates stereotypes about the role of women. Advertising frequently uses sexist images of women to sell products, and newspapers continue to run employment notices that include "requirements" related to women's physical appearance. Media monitoring of campaign coverage in 2007 found that the number of women candidates appearing or mentioned on television and radio was considerably less than 10% of the total time devoted to politicians.<sup>70</sup> In general print media presented statements by female candidates in a neutral manner, without advocating for increased participation or gender equality. Most interviews of female candidates conducted by the press, however, included questions about combining family responsibilities and a political career and whether it is necessary to have women in politics.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ovnatanyan, Tamara, *Кривое зеркало, Репрезентация женского экспертного мнения в СМИ: поиск закономерностей [The crooked mirror, Representations of women's opinions in the media: the search for normality]*, KavkAsia, (2005), available at [http://caucasiasia.at.ua/publ/stati/smi/krivoe\\_zerkalo/1-1-0-3](http://caucasiasia.at.ua/publ/stati/smi/krivoe_zerkalo/1-1-0-3).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Hasratyan, Jemma, et al., *Women's Political Participation in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Armenia*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, pp. 48, 50.

An NGO that supports the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people commented that one of the most serious issues facing the LGBT community in Armenia is stigma and discrimination from the media. The organization regularly responds to homophobia, hate speech and stereotyped images that appear on television (often in locally-produced soap operas), on the radio, in the newspapers and on internet sites and blogs. The organization has had some success in having discriminatory materials removed, but there do not appear to be any State programs to proactively address negative stereotypes in the media, as was outlined in the National Action Plan for 2004-2010.

Several non-governmental efforts have focused on both increasing gender-sensitivity of journalists themselves and providing better coverage of the achievements of women. The Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Yerevan and the British Embassy have collaborated for several years on the Na/Ne Annual Media Competition to honor media materials about the activity and achievements of women in political, economic and social spheres.<sup>72</sup> After the first year's submission proved to contain many stereotypes about women, the organizers held a training program for journalists and editors on gender-sensitive depictions of women in politics. Even so, in some years the jury has been unable to award a first prize due to poor quality of the reporting, which suggests that greater efforts are needed to improve the professionalism of the media. A second project initiated by the OSCE is the regular publication of a monthly insert *Women in Politics* in Armenia and Russian languages that is included in a broad range of local newspapers. This assessment did not reveal any specific media projects to provide alternative portrayals of men or to counter stereotypes that reinforce unhealthy and self-destructive behaviors among men.

### **3.2.4. Rule of Law/Access to Justice**

The principles of equality regardless of one's sex and respect for fundamental human rights are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.<sup>73</sup> The laws of Armenia are gender neutral, with the exception of a few instances in which the law offers greater protection for women, for example the quota system in the Electoral Code, protections for pregnant employees in the Labor Code<sup>74</sup> and mitigating circumstances or exemptions for pregnant women or women with young children in the Criminal Code.

The neutrality of Armenian legislation is cited as an indicator of *de jure* equality between men and women. While a gender neutral approach is a critical component of gender mainstreaming, the legal system as a whole must also recognize and address specific violations of women's rights. In Armenia, there remain critical gaps in this area; for example, there is no law on domestic violence although a draft was submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues for circulation in 2009. The Labor Code punishes sexual harassment in the workplace,<sup>75</sup> but respondents to this assessment stated that this provision is neither well known nor used. A more detailed discussion of violence against women and sexual harassment is included below. Individual women have had success in resolving violations of their rights related to illegal termination, generally through negotiation or in rare cases by going to court, but such patterns of violations of women's rights are not identified as systemic problems that could be addressed proactively by the justice system. In addition, there is little, if any, case law on sex-based discrimination cases, although anecdotal evidence suggests that such discrimination occurs regularly in hiring, promotion, remuneration and termination processes. Two attorneys explained that it is very hard to prove discrimination, and that the evidentiary basis for a successful case has not been established in legal practice. Furthermore, employees are generally in a weaker position than employers due to the lack of specific agencies to enforce workers' rights and limited legal protection against retaliatory measures by employers.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See <http://www.britishcouncil.org/armenia-science-society-women-in-politics-nane.htm>.

<sup>73</sup> "Everyone shall be equal before the law. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited", Article 14.1, Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

<sup>74</sup> In the case of employment laws pertaining to childcare leave, most Labor Code provisions refer neutrally to the "employee raising a child."

<sup>75</sup> Article 221, Labor Code.

<sup>76</sup> *Implementation of the UN Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women for the Period 2002- 2007*, Democracy Today/All Armenian Union of Women, p. 20.

The law has not been used creatively as it has in other countries to address endemic problems facing women, such as violations of Electoral Code provisions on women's placement on party lists or sexist media images, which could arguably violate the prohibition on the use of insulting phrases or images based on sex set forth in the Law on Advertising. Likewise, respondents were not familiar with either domestic cases citing European human rights law on sex-based discrimination or in any applications made to the European Court of Human Rights based on violations of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Interest was expressed, however, in expanding the legal practice of strategic litigation and class action lawsuits, so potentially these mechanisms could be applied to patterns of women's rights violations in Armenia.

There are areas where women are particularly vulnerable in legal matters, due to their general status, lack of legal knowledge and lack of information on how to protect their rights. Women's most common legal problems concern family issues, such as domestic violence and divorce as well as property distribution, housing and obtaining child support. Although the law considers property obtained during marriage to be commonly owned by the spouses, in reality high-value property may be officially registered in the name of a husband's family member, leaving the woman with limited claims. Many women seek legal assistance connected to non-payment of child support, particularly when the former spouse has migrated for work or is earning a portion of his salary unofficially.

Because of their lower economic status, women often lack the financial resources to hire private attorneys, and this affects their abilities to seek justice and obtain redress for wrongs. Free or affordable legal services are, therefore, especially important for women. Under Armenian law, a non-lawyer can serve as a representative in civil cases, but guarantees of free legal assistance apply only to defense attorneys in criminal cases. Legal clinics, through universities, travelling lawyer programs and legal counseling services offered by NGOs that staff lawyers have proven to be important mechanisms to fill the gap.

The legal profession itself also exhibits gender imbalance. Although it was reported that women currently make up a slight majority of law students, they are under-represented in authoritative positions within the legal profession. The composition of the judiciary has changed little from 2004-2008, with men representing approximately 80% of judges and just over 60% of attorneys.<sup>77</sup> The current President of the Constitutional Court and all members are men. Women's representation in the Office of the Prosecutor is also low. In 2007, only 8% of prosecutors were women and, on the whole, women were only 6% of employees in prosecutor's offices.<sup>78</sup> The numbers of female legal graduates may eventually lead to greater balance in all sectors of the legal profession, but one interviewee also noted that there is no affirmative action to recruit women into these positions.

### **3.3. Economic Development**

Armenia saw considerable economic growth in the mid 2000's, but this pattern has reversed in the last years, in part related to the global economic downturn. Other factors, such as a decline in remittances related to the financial crisis in Russia, downturn in the construction sector, serious constraints to doing business and Armenia's continued isolation from Azerbaijan and Turkey, also present challenges for the country. While both economic growth and downturns arguably impact the entire population, distinct gender inequalities in the economy and labor market mean that women are not positioned to benefit as directly or as significantly from future reforms in this sector.

#### **3.3.1. Gender Balance in the Labor Market**

Women are less active in the formal workforce than men. Considering the entire population of working age men and women, 73.9% of men are economically active in comparison to only 50.4% of women.<sup>79</sup> Women make up a larger share of students and pensioners, and as a reflection of prevailing

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<sup>77</sup> Here, the term "attorney" refers to an attorney-at-law or a barrister under the British system. *Gender Responsive Budget and Gender State in Armenia*, p. 42.

<sup>78</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), p. 40.

<sup>79</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 82.

gender norms, are more likely to be engaged in unpaid work, such as caring for the home and children. As mentioned above, studies show that women spend about five times more time on unpaid work than men. Unpaid work consists of such activities as housework, childcare, care for other family members and shopping. Women are also more likely to work in the informal or unregulated economy, in such jobs as cleaners or babysitters.<sup>80</sup>

The labor market in Armenia exhibits both horizontal and vertical segregation. Specific occupations are generally considered “appropriate” for men or women and this results in horizontal segregation in which women are virtually absent from some spheres yet are overrepresented in others. For example, there are few women, as compared with men, employed in the following spheres for which the government keeps statistics: construction (2.6% of employees are women), energy [energy, gas and water supply] (15.1% are women), and transport and communication (17.3% are women).<sup>81</sup> In other spheres, women employees outnumber men, for example in education (81.2% of educators are women), health and social services (83.2% are women). Some sectors, such as hospitality [hotels and restaurants] (56.9% women and 43.1% men), wholesale and retail trade (42.1% women and 57.9% men) and financial services (47% women and 53% men) appear more balanced.<sup>82</sup> USAID has focused on three sectors that were determined to have the most potential for growth: information technology (IT)/ high tech industry, pharmaceuticals and tourism. Interviewees explained that the IT sector is currently male-dominated, but at the same time is a field which could potentially provide employment for women with families and those living outside of the capital, through telecommuting and flexible work schedules. IT does not appear, however, that high-tech companies in Armenia are adopting strategies to improve diversity in the workplace, as analogous companies have done in other countries. Men work in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and women tend to work in pharmacies or sales side of this industry. It was noted that there are more female business owners in the tourism/ hospitality field than in IT or pharmaceuticals, but many such businesses may actually be only registered in a woman’s name, a subject discussed below in more detail. Still, mainly women work in the client-oriented fields of the tourism industry, and some female entrepreneurs are developing small-scale eco-tourism projects. Other industries identified as open to women are textile/fashion,



architecture and design.

Due to vertical segregation, women are less likely to occupy managerial positions in their professional lives. Discriminatory practices also decrease the opportunities for promotion and career advancement. As noted above, in the section on political participation, a widespread stereotype persists that women are not skilled in leadership, but are better suited for administrative positions.

At the same time, although Armenian law allows for parental leave, women are far more likely to take time out of their careers to raise children, which puts them at a disadvantage in terms of advancement as compared to men.

Due to both horizontal and vertical segregation, the gender pay gap is significant in Armenia. In 2008, women on average earned 68,010 drams (approximately \$186 USD)

per month compared to male earnings of 116,787 drams (approximately \$319 USD); women’s earnings represented 58.2% of men’s earnings.<sup>83</sup> Such pay inequalities are explained by the fact that women are underrepresented in profitable and high paying sectors, whereas fields in which women

<sup>80</sup> *Implementation of the UN Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women for the Period 2002- 2007*, Democracy Today /All Armenian Union of Women, p. 18.

<sup>81</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 85

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Average Monthly Nominal Wages by Sex, *Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2009*, <http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=45>.

dominate, such as education and healthcare, have the lowest salaries. Nevertheless, even in these particular sectors, as well as fields with greater gender balance, women's monthly wages are lower than those of men. For example, in 2008, women's average monthly salary in health and social services was 72.2% of men's monthly salary, 83.4% of men's salaries in education and 76.9% of men's monthly salaries in hospitality (hotels and restaurants).<sup>84</sup> Vertical segregation means that women tend to occupy lower paying positions within a sector. Experts have also noted that pay gaps are the smallest in low-paid sectors that depend on financing from the State budget. In contrast, in sectors where salaries are higher than the average for the economy as a whole, such as finance, women's wages are dramatically lower; in the case of financial services women earned just 47.2% of men's salaries in 2008.<sup>85</sup> Even as certain sectors of the economy have become less segregated, the effect on women has not been positive. For example, as wages in the service sector have increased, more men have found employment there, and women have been pushed from the banking sphere as salaries increased.<sup>86</sup>

### 3.3.2. Discrimination in the Workplace

Patterns of gender discrimination in the workplace were well known to the respondents of this assessment and seem to be accepted practice even though they violate Armenian labor law. Beginning in the hiring process, the use of qualifications such as "attractive" in job advertisements aimed at women seems to be less common now than in the past but still persists. It is not uncommon for employers to specify a preference for male candidates in job advertisements even for positions, such as restaurant work, where this is not a legitimate qualification. Interviewees for this assessment that work with recruiters from several sectors of private business noted that employers ask female job candidates questions about their ability to reconcile work duties with family life, whether their husbands will permit them to work late or about their plans to start a family. According to an Armenian lawyer, unlawful termination of pregnant employees or women returning from maternity leave also occurs. While it was explained that the current system of support for a woman on maternity leave and holding her job is financially burdensome for employers, there seems to be no initiative to address alternative ways to support families to balance home and work obligations. In general, policies and practices that enable a work-life balance and support women's career development, such as provisions for expecting and breastfeeding mothers, affordable child care, flexible work options, telecommuting, workforce re-entry opportunities or mentoring programs to ensure promotion of women who have taken time off work, do not seem to be a part of the business culture in Armenia.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a serious manifestation of discrimination, often forcing women to leave their jobs, and is a form of violence against women. According to a 2004 survey, 64% of women interviewed had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>87</sup> One of five women had been forced to leave their job due to sexual harassment and 5% "had been forced to enter an unwanted relationship with a male colleague in a management position in order to retain their jobs."<sup>88</sup> Based on the survey results, it was concluded that women working in State-run organizations as well as those who postponed marriage in order to further their careers were the most vulnerable to sexual harassment. In another study- of factors that hinder the development of women's business- 21% of respondents cited cases of sexual harassment in establishing business contacts.<sup>89</sup> Sexual harassment is defined in the Labor Code as a "violation of labor norms," specifically the "violation of the equal rights of women and men or sexual harassment against employees, subordinates or beneficiaries,"<sup>90</sup> akin to the disclosure of competitive information or abusing alcohol or drugs at the workplace, which can lead to sanctions or dismissal. The legal definition of sexual harassment is unclear and, due to

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<sup>84</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 93.

<sup>85</sup> *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007*, Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE), p. 48.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> See *No Pride in Silence, Countering Violence in the Family in Armenia*, Amnesty International, (2008), p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Бизнес с женским лицом [Business with a woman's face]*, speech of Liliya Gevorgyan, Fund to Assist Business Women in Armenia, (2009), available at [http://www.ojng.ru/foto\\_21vvbezgranic\\_gev.html](http://www.ojng.ru/foto_21vvbezgranic_gev.html).

<sup>90</sup> Article 221, Labor Code of the Republic of Armenia.

lack of case law, it cannot be determined whether the Labor Code refers only to *quid pro quo* harassment.<sup>91</sup> It does not appear that sexual harassment is treated as either an occupational health and safety or a human resources issue that would be dealt with proactively by an enterprise.

### 3.3.3. Entrepreneurship and the Business Climate

Support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has been a key component of donor efforts to improve economic stability in Armenia. While globally women's entrepreneurship has been recognized as "an important untapped source of economic growth,"<sup>92</sup> women's participation in business in Armenia lags behind men's and the region in general. In the Eastern Europe and Central

Asian region as a whole, women are far more likely to own micro businesses (defined as having 1-9 employees), followed by small (10-49 employees), medium (50-99 employees) and least likely to own large businesses (over 100 employees).<sup>93</sup> This pattern differs from other regions where women are most often owners of small enterprises. Comparing Armenia to the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region, "female participation in the labor force, in firm ownership and in management is lower" than in most other countries.<sup>94</sup>



On the whole 31.8% of enterprises in Armenia officially have some female participation in ownership, while only 13.5% of such firms have women in top management positions.<sup>95</sup> Even these figures should be regarded with caution as they may be overestimates. A number of respondents to this assessment noted that it is not uncommon for male business owners to register companies under the name of a wife or female relative, but that in reality the operation of the business remains in their control. This practice is especially used by public figures with interests in large businesses that they prefer not to disclose. It was explained that in reality women are mostly at the level of micro business. The Fund to Assist Business Women in Armenia estimates that only 8% of entrepreneurs are women but also notes that reliable data is lacking.<sup>96</sup>

As in other sectors, there is also labor segregation in private business; a higher number of female employees work in service firms as compared to manufacturing. Small firms are also more likely to employ women than medium enterprises, which can be explained by the fact that women are more likely to own micro and small businesses in areas where women predominate such as small-scale trade, services and food preparation. Both the size of the enterprise and the sector seem to have an influence on women's position in upper management and as employees. Twenty-one percent of small firms have women in top management as compared to 4% for medium, 7% for large firms and no female top managers in enterprises with government ownership.<sup>97</sup> Such patterns suggest that gender stereotypes influence the business world. A reason to encourage women in business is that the likelihood that a private enterprise will employ women increases when there is female participation in ownership. In Armenia, there is a much closer correlation between firms that have women in top

<sup>91</sup> The Criminal Code prohibition of forced sexual acts by means of threat, blackmail or a situation of financial or other dependence could also conceivably be used in cases of *quid pro quo* sexual harassment.

<sup>92</sup> *Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners*, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, (2010), p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Running a Business in Armenia*, Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series, World Bank Group, (2009).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Бизнес с женским лицом [Business with a woman's face]*, speech of Liliya Gevorgyan.

<sup>97</sup> *Running a Business in Armenia*, Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series, World Bank Group, (2009).

management positions and female participation in ownership than in firms with male management.<sup>98</sup> Of course, in this case women's ownership of business must be accompanied by decision-making functions and not be merely a nominal position.

The portrait of a female entrepreneur in Armenia is quite specific. Most such women are primarily motivated to go into business in order to provide for their families and not out of "entrepreneurial drive or interest."<sup>99</sup> A study of women entrepreneurs in the North of Armenia found that 33% had non-working husbands, 31% had husbands who had migrated for work and 21% had no husbands; only 15% had working husbands.<sup>100</sup> Women's decision to enter business primarily out of necessity to support the family explains some of the obstacles they identify, such lack of preparedness, lack of business skills and training, feelings of uncertainty and an unwillingness to take risks.

USAID and other donors have recognized that increasing the competitiveness of the private sector and removing barriers to SME growth are crucial to reinvigorating the economy. A number of constraints, however, make the climate unfavorable to business development, and these constraints also have a differential gender impact. Small and medium businesses (here defined as having up to 19 employees and from 20-99 employees, respectively) report significantly more constraints than large business, and small businesses in particular are more likely to identify such issues as access to finance, the need to make informal payments to officials to facilitate business (an indicator of corruption) and difficulties obtaining licenses and permits as obstacles to doing business.<sup>101</sup> While such issues impact anyone doing business, it is important to note that women are much more likely to be running small businesses where constraints are felt more acutely. In addition, women are generally more risk adverse than men, and if there are no positive incentives for women-owned enterprises the current climate may dissuade women, from opening or expanding a business. One respondent to this assessment made an interesting observation in the context of taxation and the business environment—that more women would be attracted to become entrepreneurs if they were specifically shown that many risks are actually lower than they perceive them.

Another constraint faced by SME owners and consistently reported as a problem by women business owners is limited access to credit. Women business owners, predominantly at the micro and small enterprise level, face difficulties obtaining credit from banks and traditional lending institutions, due to the size of their businesses, limited access to collateral (as property is generally registered in the name of a husband or male relative) and burdensome interest rates. One solution to alleviate SME lending problems is to promote value chain financing where loans at lower interest rates are taken for shorter terms and banks face less risk. Gender differences in value chains have not been analyzed in Armenia but such research is critical. The sex-segregated nature of the labor market in Armenia suggests that, like other countries, "female employment [may be] concentrated in labor-intensive, low value-added activities."<sup>102</sup> If this is the case, value chain analysis should be used to identify the balance of power and governance between men and women within the particular value chains in which USAID is planning to work. Such information should lead to targeted programming and inform specific activities to ensure that female and male workers and producers along value chains are supported.

### 3.4. Social Issues

As in other sectors, men and women have distinct needs in regard to healthcare and social services and also have different opportunities to access them. Some of these differences are based on biological factors (reproductive health issues, for example) but a great many are influenced by attitudinal and behavioral factors.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Wistrand, Birgitta, *Women empowerment and cooperation in Armenia with a focus on the Syunik region*, p. 14.

<sup>100</sup> *Бизнес с женским лицом [Business with a woman's face]*, speech of Liliya Gevorgyan.

<sup>101</sup> Enterprise Surveys, Armenia Country Profile 2009, World Bank, (2009).

<sup>102</sup> See *Gender and Economic Value Chains: Two Case Studies from the GATE Project*, USAID WID Office website, [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/eg/gate\\_valuechain.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/eg/gate_valuechain.html).

### 3.4.1. Healthcare

Life expectancy in Armenia has increased slightly among women in the last decades and not at all for men. The life expectancy at birth for both men and women of Armenia is lower than the regional average, and the difference between female life expectancy (72 years) and male life expectancy (65 years)<sup>103</sup> is considerable. While many causes of death are common to both men and women, men are almost three times more likely to die from accidents and injuries than women.<sup>104</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified several specific health risks for Armenia that show distinct gender patterns, most of them lifestyle-associated. Armenia has the highest male smoking rate in the WHO European Region. Tobacco consumption is rising among both men and women in Armenia, but the prevalence of male smokers age 15 and above (55% of this population) is much higher than that of females of the same age (4%). Even allowing for underreporting by women, due to social stigmas against smoking, the difference is large. Alcohol consumption is a risk factor for men, and while obesity and inactivity are causes of poor health in both men and women, obesity is more prevalent in women.<sup>105</sup> Although government spending on healthcare has increased considerably in Armenia, and has included a new emphasis on primary healthcare, general education about healthy lifestyles and public health messages directed toward the specific risks faced by men and women are limited.

The Government of Armenia has prioritized the provision of maternal health services for Armenian women, which has undoubtedly contributed to improvements in the maternal mortality rate. Significant donor efforts, including a large multi-year USAID program, have focused on women's health, specifically on improving reproductive health and family planning practices. The achievements of such programs are significant,<sup>106</sup> but challenges also remain. For instance, abortion rates are high, which is generally attributed to unplanned pregnancies when contraception was not used. In 2005, 45% of all pregnancies ended in induced abortion, more than one third of Armenian women had an abortion, and among women who had ever had an abortion, 45% had two or three such procedures.<sup>107</sup> While slightly under half of married women were not using contraception, 34% were using a traditional method of contraception (usually withdrawal) and only 19% were using modern methods (most commonly intrauterine devices- IUD- and male condoms).<sup>108</sup>

Many factors impact a woman's ability to use modern contraception and practice safe sex, including whether she lives in an urban or rural area, knowledge about and affordability of contraception. In Armenia, cultural norms may restrict women's ability to negotiate sex. In sexual relations, women have a subordinate status, where "men wield considerably more power and control than women [and]... women are not empowered to refuse to have sexual relations and/or are not in a position to negotiate the use of condoms with their sexual partner or husband."<sup>109</sup> Culturally, it is considered improper for women to initiate sexual relations, but women are expected to respond to the needs of a partner. In a survey of societal attitudes, 36% of respondents agreed with the statement "it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it," with rural residents most often agreeing with this statement (48%).<sup>110</sup> Domestic violence, discussed in more detail below, is a serious problem in Armenia, and further limits women's ability to negotiate sexual relations and safe sex practices. These factors, women's economic and social dependence on men and gendered divisions of power, are also strong forces in families with male labor migrants. As described in more detail below, women with migrant husbands are less likely to use contraceptives and family planning.

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<sup>103</sup> Jakubowski, Elka and Arnaudova, Albena, *10 Health Questions about the Caucasus and Central Asia*, World Health Organization, (2009), p. 5.

<sup>104</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 29.

<sup>105</sup> Jakubowski, Elka and Arnaudova, Albena, *10 Health Questions about the Caucasus and Central Asia*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>106</sup> See, e.g., *Five Years Together: Advancing Maternal & Child Health in Armenia*, Project NOVA Final Report, Emerging Markets Group Ltd. for USAID/Armenia, (2010) for a detailed overview of the program and achievements.

<sup>107</sup> *Armenia 2005 Demographic and Health Survey Key Findings*, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Ministry of Health, (2005), p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Harutyunyan, Anahit and Petrosyan, Zhaneta, *Culturally Appropriate HIV Behaviour Change Communication in the Republic of Armenia*, Positive People Armenian Network/ UNESCO, (2010), p. 20.

<sup>110</sup> Dallakyan, Ani and Hakobyan, Narine, *Domestic Violence and Abuse of Women in Armenia: Report on Nationwide Survey Findings*, Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis/Women's Rights Center, (2007), p. 72.

Cultural attitudes also play a role in the determining the sexual practices of men and women and are linked to the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among some populations. It is not acceptable for young women to engage in pre-marital sex, but it is considered normal for young men to have sexual relations with commercial sex workers before marriage.<sup>111</sup> This pattern continues into marriage where women are expected have one partner and be faithful to their husbands while “men are allowed and even sometimes encouraged by the society to have sexual contacts with other women.”<sup>112</sup> Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data for Armenia found that the average number of lifetime sexual partners for women was one and among men were 5.6.<sup>113</sup> Even adjusting for possible underreporting (women) and over reporting (men), the survey confirms anecdotal information and also indicates that numbers of sexual partners for men increases with their education and income levels. An interviewee for the present assessment noted that most women would be uncomfortable asking a partner to use a condom and that there would even be some shame associated with this request as condom use is associated with prostitution. It is generally men in the relationship who make decisions about protection and testing for STIs.

Overall, the approach taken by the Armenian Government and donors is to target messages about reproductive health, pregnancy, maternal health, family planning and contraception to women, with limited attempts to increase male participation or responsibility in this area. For example, in 2005 the Ministry of Health established “Schools of Motherhood” where services such as counseling to women, instruction on childbirth and delivery and information about healthy lifestyles during and after pregnancy were offered free to women as part of a basic healthcare package. Attendance in the program was very low but has since been improved through a USAID project. The focus, however, remains on mothers, and male participation is achieved primarily by asking women to bring their spouses or partners. Family planning messages and information about contraception, are likewise, pitched towards women. Such an approach does not take into account some of the factors described above that limit a woman’s ability to negotiate safe sex and use certain forms of contraception. Furthermore, an approach that does not engage men directly may serve, inadvertently, to reinforce stereotypes that women are solely responsible for issues around contraception and pregnancy.

Respondents to this assessment from the health field drew attention to the problem of STIs, including HIV, among certain male populations (labor migrants and men who use commercial sexual services). Sexually transmitted infections present serious health concerns for men, can lead to infertility and can also be a risk to partners. Men are the majority of HIV cases in Armenia (72.4%), just over half of whom were infected as a result of injecting drug use (56%). The HIV rate for women is still relatively low in Armenia (27.6% of all HIV cases), but 98% of women were infected through heterosexual contacts,<sup>114</sup> often from their single partner. HIV is also affecting a young population; 58% of HIV-infected individuals in Armenia are from 25 to 39. The topic of interventions directed specifically at labor migrants and their families is discussed in the section below. Research, however, indicates that some of the factors identified in communities from which there is out migration also generally put men at risk for STI infection. In rural areas specifically rates of STI treatment are low due to such factors as shame around the subject and lack of confidentiality in small communities, lack of information about vulnerabilities to HIV



<sup>111</sup> Harutyunyan, Anahit and Petrosyan, Zhaneta, *Culturally Appropriate HIV Behaviour Change Communication in the Republic of Armenia*, p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> *Armenia 2005 Demographic and Health Survey Key Findings*, (2005), p. 173.

<sup>114</sup> *HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Armenia*, National Center for AIDS Prevention, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, available at [http://www.armmaids.am/main/free\\_code.php?lng=1&parent=3](http://www.armmaids.am/main/free_code.php?lng=1&parent=3).

especially among young males and limited HIV/AIDS education in schools.<sup>115</sup> It is not clear to what extent prevention and education messages around HIV/AIDS and STIs in general target the vulnerabilities of young men.

A related issue is the availability of sexual health information and services for young men, and women, generally, and for the LGBT community specifically. An organization that carries out programming on sexual health noted that it is important both to empower young women to understand their sexual rights and also to work with men to change their behavior and end stereotypes. At present there is no formal curriculum of sexual education in schools, but such topics may be touched on in healthy lifestyles courses. As noted in a study on male role models in the school system, boys may have particular difficulties accessing advice and information about male sexuality as they lack mentors, and female teachers or relatives may avoid such discussions out of discomfort.<sup>116</sup> The health needs of members of the LGBT community are also distinct, but because of their orientation they face stigma from society and the medical community. Some medical professionals still refer to homosexuality as a disease or psychosis. The hostility and discrimination that men who have sex with men (MSM) face means that they do not access medical or social services and are often lacking critical information about behavioral and other risks for STIs and HIV as well as prevention messages.<sup>117</sup>

During this assessment, several people explained that there are gender differences in health-seeking behavior. Traditionally and culturally, women more often take responsibility for their own health care and that of family members. This not only places a burden on women, but men's lack of responsibility may be correlated to their tendency to see physicians only when illness has become serious and also to engage in unhealthy behaviors. Family physicians, which is a relatively new profession in Armenia, are now educated in women's and men's health, and the Unified Family Medicine Curriculum acknowledges that previously "issues of men's health have not been considered as a separate health care problem," noting that men visit physicians less frequently and are often reserved in discussing specific health problems, such as mental health and sexual dysfunction.<sup>118</sup> The curriculum includes training on treating concerns of male patients and sexual and reproductive health, specifically. It is also important to note that women professionals dominate at the primary level of healthcare institutions, particularly among family practitioners. A respondent to this assessment theorized that this imbalance, and the lack of specialist attention to male health concerns, could have an impact on men's ability to obtain basic health care services.

A final issue that cuts across health and deeper social stereotypes and was mentioned during this assessment process is the issue of son-preference and the use of sex-selective abortions in Armenia. A recent article drew attention to the low birth rate of females as compared to males in a number of countries, including Armenia.<sup>119</sup> This article was apparently received with some skepticism, as it is known that official statistics on abortion rates can be unreliable. However, official figures from 2008 on the sex ratio of boys to girls at birth do indicate a higher number of boys being born than the naturally occurring ratio (115 boys to 100 girls).<sup>120</sup> Many respondents were not surprised to hear about claims of sex-selective abortions and gave anecdotal evidence to suggest that they are taking place. Sonograms are affordable and widely available, and some people noted disparities in the numbers of school-age boys and girls. It was explained that women are generally determining the sex of the child during a second or third pregnancy. Importantly, the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey for Armenia to be conducted from October to December includes questions on pregnancy history in order to calculate abortion and neonatal rates. At present there is clearly inadequate

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<sup>115</sup> Grigoryan S., Papoyan A., Petrosyan Zh., Harutyunyan A., Grigoryan T., and Hovhannisyan R., *Report on the study focused on developing effective HIV preventive activities and interventions among the migrants originating from urban and rural areas of the Republic of Armenia and their family members*, National Center for AIDS Prevention/UNDP, (2008), pp.29-32.

<sup>116</sup> Martirosyan, Mariam, *Lack of Adult Male Role Models in Secondary Schools of Armenia and its Impact on Armenian Male Teenagers' Conceptualizations of Masculinities*.

<sup>117</sup> *Armenia 2005 Demographic and Health Survey Key Findings*, (2005), p. 23.

<sup>118</sup> See [http://www.phcr.am/upload/files/ufmc\\_eng.pdf](http://www.phcr.am/upload/files/ufmc_eng.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> *Gendercide: The worldwide war on baby girls*, *The Economist*, 4 March 2010.

<sup>120</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 21.

evidence to make firm conclusions about the prevalence of sex-selective abortions in Armenia, but significant warning signs exist to warrant increased attention to what could be a very serious manifestation of gender discrimination and at the very least questioning of assumptions that high abortion rates are due mainly to lack of access to modern contraception.

### 3.4.2. Unemployment

Unemployment rates for women are higher than for men. The official unemployment rate in 2008 for women was 9.3 and 3.2 for men.<sup>121</sup> In the same year, women made up 75.5% of the officially registered unemployed.<sup>122</sup> These figures should be approached with some caution. Women are much more likely to register as unemployed for a variety of reasons and so these numbers are not reflective of the overall unemployment rates for men and women in Armenia. Additionally, significant numbers of men who would potentially be unemployed in Armenia are labor migrants in other countries. Still, research shows that in Armenia, as in other transition economies, women are the first to lose jobs and employers give preference to hiring men for most vacancies.<sup>123</sup>

In addition, women and men experience unemployment differently. It was noted that registering as officially employed is one prerequisite for receiving certain social benefits that women may depend on more than men. In addition, cultural norms prevent men from seeking assistance and so they may be deterred from registering as unemployed. Men are also more likely to find work through informal networks than to participate in job search or retraining programs. Reasons for male and female unemployment also differ. Women are more likely than men to become unemployed as a result of staff reductions or due to family circumstances, and men are more likely to be affected by the end of temporary or seasonal work.<sup>124</sup>

The Ministry of Labor and Social Issues manages the State Employment Service Agency (SESA). The SESA operates 51 regional and local Employment Offices (on average, four per *marz* and 10 in Yerevan) that provide support to job seekers and also connect employers with qualified candidates. A true assessment of the work of the SESA in terms of gender differences in employment is beyond the scope of this project, but as mentioned above, it was noted that due to associations with benefits, women are much more likely to use SESA services. It is not known what role, if any, SESA plays in working with employers to reduce stereotyped notions of which jobs are suitable for women or men.

Another factor that particularly puts young people at risk for unemployment is the divergence between the knowledge base that students gain in the public education system and the skills that the labor market demands. Several respondents noted that a large portion of highly educated youth in Armenia cannot find work due to a lack of the skills that employers seek. Education is greatly valued in Armenia, and women make up a larger share of advanced degree holders, but nevertheless the higher educational system shows a pattern of segregation in academic subjects that is reflected in the labor market. Men tend to study in technical fields and women are concentrated in the humanities. It is, therefore, likely that young women university graduates have fewer prospects of finding work in the fields that are currently the most dynamic and profitable in Armenia. Despite low numbers of women in specific sectors of the economy, internship programs that a USAID implementer is facilitating with the private sector currently have no particular focus on attracting young women or promoting women to these fields.

A respondent to this assessment noted that in general there are very few opportunities for skill enhancement for people who have some work history. While there have been some training programs in the fields of construction and IT, those that are aimed at women have been very traditionally oriented and promote skills in such areas as cooking, sewing, hairdressing and salon services, design and nursing- and not necessarily responsive to market needs.

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<sup>121</sup> Unemployment rates, Average Monthly Nominal Wages by Sex, *Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2009*.

<sup>122</sup> Number and Composition of Officially Registered Unemployed, *ibid*.

<sup>123</sup> Tadevosyan, Gohar, *RA Labor Market Research*, MES PIU and Employment State Service Agency, (2006), p. 24

<sup>124</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 91.

### 3.4.3. Social Protection of Vulnerable Groups

Two groups of socially vulnerable citizens were highlighted in this assessment process: pensioners and people living with disabilities. In the case of the elderly, gender differences are quite apparent. On average, women in Armenia live longer than men but they also have shorter work histories (often due to taking time off to raise children), earn lower salaries, are more likely to have been employed in the informal sector or to have undertaken non-paid work, and often outlive their spouses. Two thirds of pensioners are women, and there is concern over how the new pension scheme, currently undergoing reform, will impact this group. As an expert points out, the “care economy” (engagement in unpaid work that supports the primary economy) is not factored in to national accounting of economic activity, and there is no measurement of the unpaid work that either women or men do outside of formal employment in Armenia.<sup>125</sup> There is also no mechanism by which time a woman devotes to unpaid work (including housework and childcare) can be counted as a contribution to her pension. It was noted that this system has a particularly negative impact on mothers of disabled children, the parent most likely to give up work to provide long-term care. In addition, women’s work in unregulated jobs, by oral agreement and without a labor contract, would also not entitle them to social or health benefits, leaving them especially vulnerable.

The Gender Policy Concept Paper identifies the risk to women of becoming extremely impoverished, particularly in old age, and respondents to this assessment confirmed that the Armenian government is looking closely at where women could be disadvantaged by the proposed pension scheme and considering measures to offset this. Already, retirement age is to be set at 63 for both men and women (previously, women retired earlier), and an expert noted that there is a small tax incentive for one spouse to create a voluntary pension fund for the other. Another aspect of the pension reform process, besides ensuring equitable outcomes for women and men, is the need for gender-specific approaches to citizen engagement and public education around changes to the system.

It proved difficult to obtain information about the intersection of gender and disability in Armenia. According to official statistics, 43.9% of people officially registered as disabled are women.<sup>126</sup> A great many of the rights that disabled persons’ organizations (DPOs) are struggling for in Armenia, such as inclusion, accessibility, accommodation in the workplace and representation, would apply to both men and women with disabilities. However, it is important to remember that women with disabilities face discrimination both because they are women and because they have a disability, but this fact is not often understood or acknowledged in policy decisions.<sup>127</sup> Slightly more than half of the disabled population in Armenia is of working age, but only 8% of disabled persons are employed.<sup>128</sup> The SESA does, however, offer special training programs for people with disabilities. Globally, while all persons with disabilities face problems entering the labor market, men with disabilities are “almost twice as likely to have jobs as disabled women.”<sup>129</sup> Given women’s lack of voice in the political debate in Armenia generally, it may also be important to take positive measures to promote the inclusion of women with disabilities in policy discussions of improving the status of women. Likewise, the lack of accessibility to specific facilities, such as to specialized women’s medical clinics or crisis centers, could have a greater negative impact on women. The correlations between domestic violence and disability are also not well understood. As mentioned above, a disproportionate number of women provide unpaid care for disabled children and other family members.

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<sup>125</sup> Petrosyan, Hrachya, *Unpaid Work and gender inequality in Armenia*, p. 2

<sup>126</sup> *Women and Men in Armenia 2009*, p. 53.

<sup>127</sup> O’Reilly, Arthur, *The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities*, Skills Working Paper No. 14, International Labor Organization, (2004), p. 30.

<sup>128</sup> International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM): *Regional Report of Europe*, (2007), p. 48.

<sup>129</sup> O’Reilly, Arthur, *The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities*, p. 31.

## 3.5. Cross-Cutting Issues

### 3.5.1. Corruption

Corruption is a problem that impedes reform in a number of areas and impacts the everyday lives of men and women. A household survey on citizen attitudes toward corruption reveals no significant differences between women and men in their willingness to engage in corrupt activities or perceptions of the corruption problem in Armenia.<sup>130</sup>

Gender-related differences in how men and women deal with corruption, however, do appear, most specifically in the area of entrepreneurship. A recent enterprise survey found that firms with male top managers and firms without female participation in ownership were more often expected to pay bribes to conduct business.<sup>131</sup> Specifically, male top managers had “almost twice as many visits or required meetings with tax inspectors than firms with female top managers . . . [and] a much higher percentage of firms with male top managers are expected to give informal payments to public officials than firms with female top managers.”<sup>132</sup> The World Bank interprets this information to suggest that firms with female top managers have less interaction with government officials. It is possible that female managers predominate in small firms in the retail sector, possibly areas that are not subject to as frequent official inspections or are viewed as less “profitable” by those seeking payment. Respondents to this assessment provided further interpretations and found it understandable that men would be more often targeted for bribes. Culturally, male government officials would find it difficult to approach women and request payment. It was also explained that men who have encountered a corrupt official are unlikely to seek outside help but would prefer to resolve such problems themselves. Women, on the other hand, were thought to be more likely to seek assistance.

Some anti-corruption measures taken by the Government of Armenia have particular positive effect on women. For example, the Ministry of Health identified women as vulnerable to specific types of corruption and now issues health vouchers to all pregnant women as a guarantee of free pre- and post-natal services and deliveries in order to prevent medical professionals from extracting additional payments. Analysis shows that out-of-pocket payments for women’s health services have declined considerably, especially among the poorest households.<sup>133</sup> Under a USAID anti-corruption program, NGOs monitor how the system is presently working.

### 3.5.2. Labor Migration

The topic of labor migration and its impact on Armenian families came up several times in this assessment. In most cases, respondents mentioned men travelling to neighboring countries, primarily Russia, for work and the impact such migration has on families. Studies indicate that gendered divisions of power and resources are especially strong in couples where the male partner migrates for work, and this appears to be the situation in Armenia as well. In rural areas, where the economic situation pushes men to migrate, the traditional division of roles in the family has changed; nevertheless “most rural women cannot imagine themselves in the role of the breadwinner for the family, since they believe that providing for the family is exclusively the man’s work. Even in cases where the family’s main income is provided by the woman, the man is still considered the head of the household”<sup>134</sup> and the decision-maker. In some cases, husbands forbid their wives from working or starting small businesses when they are away.

Labor migration presents considerable risks for men as well, particularly associated with unregulated and potentially unsafe work, their vulnerabilities to labor exploitation and long periods of absence from families and their communities. One implementer that works with young people noted that a

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<sup>130</sup> 2009-2010 *Corruption Surveys of Households and Enterprises Report*, Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), provided by the Mobilizing Action Against Corruption Project (MAAC).

<sup>131</sup> *Running a Business in Armenia*, Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series, World Bank Group (2009).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> See generally, *Affordability and Equity in Access to Health Services in Armenia: Is Progress Being Made? A Comparison of the Results of the 2006 and 2008 Armenian Household Health Expenditure Surveys*, Primary Healthcare Reform Project/USAID, (2010), available at <http://www.phcr.am/index.php?p=27&l=eng>.

<sup>134</sup> *Implementation of the UN Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women for the Period 2002- 2007*, Democracy Today /All Armenian Union of Women, pp. 22-23.

great many of them have grown up having little interaction with their fathers who are working abroad. Labor migration has also been linked to increased STI rates when men practice risky sexual behavior while abroad (e.g. injecting drug use, multiple sexual partners and using commercial sex services) and their female partners are unable to negotiate for safe sex. A recent study on male migration from Armenia confirmed that women married to migrants are at greater risk for STIs and that this risk correlates positively with economic status.<sup>135</sup> The percentage of women, married to migrants, reporting a STI diagnosis in the past three years was almost 2.5 times that of women married to non-migrants, the risk of infection increased with each additional year the husband worked as a migrant and with an increase in income. This last finding may be explained by the fact that men with greater income have more opportunities to engage in sexually risky behavior and that gender inequalities become greater with the wife in a more dependent position. Studies of factors in migrants' home communities that present risks for HIV infection suggest that greater efforts should be targeted at rural villages. Specifically improvements are needed in providing information and services on reproductive health and STIs, in reducing stigma and shame around STI treatment and testing, and targeting young men, particularly potential labor migrants, with education and awareness-raising.<sup>136</sup>

### 3.5.3. Violence against Women

Violence against women is a form of gender-based violence (GBV). Gender-based violence refers to harm that is perpetrated against a person (female or male) as a result of power inequalities that are themselves based on gender roles. Due to gender discrimination, which places women in vulnerable and disempowered positions, women are disproportionately the victims of GBV and “suffer exacerbated consequences as compared with what men endure.”<sup>137</sup> Violence against women (VAW) not only causes physical and psychological harm but also has serious repercussions for women's ability to participate fully in the political and economic life of the country.

A number of respondents to this assessment mentioned VAW as a serious problem in Armenia, most often referring to domestic violence. Because there is no legal definition of domestic violence, and reporting of cases is inconsistent, there are no official statistics on the magnitude of the problem. Lack of statistical information was frequently cited as reason for the government's slow recognition of the problem and limited response. However, a number of large-scale studies have been conducted since 2000, and they provide considerable evidence of the problem in Armenia. Briefly summarized, major findings are as follows:

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<sup>135</sup> Sevoyan, Arusyak and Agadjanian, Victor, *Male Migration, Women Left Behind and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Armenia*, International Migration Review, Volume 44 Number 2, (Summer 2010), pp. 354–375.

<sup>136</sup> Grigoryan S., Papoyan A., Petrosyan Zh., Harutyunyan A., Grigoryan T., and Hovhannisyan R., *Report on the study focused on developing effective HIV preventive activities and interventions among the migrants originating from urban and rural areas of the Republic of Armenia and their family members*.

<sup>137</sup> UNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action to Addressing Gender-based Violence 2008-2011.

**Table 4: Summary of Research on Domestic Violence in Armenia**

<b>Study:</b>	<b>Findings:</b>
Survey of 1,200 women (2001) <sup>138</sup>	45.7% had experienced psychological abuse; 28% had experienced physical abuse; 20.2% had experienced sexual harassment.
Survey of 6,566 women and 1,447 men (2005) <sup>139</sup>	31% of men and 22% of women agreed with at least one reason justifying a husband beating a wife.
Survey of 2,500 households (2006) <sup>140</sup>	50.5% of people surveyed responded affirmatively when asked if domestic violence is common for Armenia (22.2% - “yes, it is widespread; 28.3% - “partially”).
Survey of 1,006 women (2007) <sup>141</sup>	66% had experienced psychological abuse; 27% had experienced “moderate physical abuse;” 12% had experienced “severe physical abuse;” A husband was the perpetrator in 85% of incidents of physical violence.
Survey of 2,763 women (2010) <sup>142</sup>	Intimate partner violence experienced by ever partnered women:  61% of women were exposed to controlling behavior; 25% of women were subjected to psychological violence/abuse; 9% of women were subjected to physical violence; 3% of women were subjected to sexual violence; 9.5% of women were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence; 7% of women gave up or refused a job because their partner did not want them to work.

Studies by NGOs and international organizations include personal testimonies of women survivors of violence<sup>143</sup> that make clear that domestic violence, which can be manifested in psychological, physical and sexual abuse as well as controlling behavior, is a real problem. The repercussions for Armenia if VAW is not addressed are serious, resulting in a loss of women’s health, economic losses for the country through women’s decreased work capacity and budgetary strains placed on the healthcare, law enforcement and legal systems.

The National Action Plan for the Improvement of Women’s Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for 2004-2010 outlines steps for eliminating violence against women, but Amnesty International found that actions by the government have been limited to research, periodic training for police and a national awareness campaign conducted in 2008 through round tables held in the capital and regions.<sup>144</sup> Discussions of the creation of a State-funded shelter or victims of violence have been ongoing for several years. A law on domestic violence was drafted though a project initiated by the Women’s Rights Center, a Yerevan-based NGO, in 2007 and while experts and the general public have discussed the draft, it has not been officially introduced in the National Assembly. However, recent events suggest that there may be more political will now to address the issue of gender-based violence. In March 2010, the State Interagency Committee to Combat Gender- Based Violence was created by a decree of the Prime Minister. Committee meetings, held in May and June, included

<sup>138</sup> Survey by Sociometer research center and Women’s Rights Center. See *No Pride in Silence, Countering Violence in the Family in Armenia*, p. 10.

<sup>139</sup> *Armenia 2005 Demographic and Health Survey Key Findings*, (2005), p. 217.

<sup>140</sup> *Survey on “Family” as an Institution*, p. 47.

<sup>141</sup> Dallakyan, Ani and Hakobyan, Narine, *Domestic Violence and Abuse of Women in Armenia: Report on Nationwide Survey Findings*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>142</sup> *Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women in Armenia 2008-2009, Executive Summary*, UNFPA (2010) (full publication forthcoming).

<sup>143</sup> Vardanyan, Susanna and Asrian, Mariam, *For Survival*, Women’s Rights Center (2005) and *No Pride in Silence, Countering Violence in the Family in Armenia*, (2008).

<sup>144</sup> *No Pride in Silence, Countering Violence in the Family in Armenia*, p. 23.

representatives of the Armenian Government, seven relevant ministries, law enforcement, international and donor organizations and four local NGOs and resulted in the adoption of a the Charter for the Interagency Committee and the creation of a working group to elaborate a National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Armenia for 2011–2014.<sup>145</sup>

NGOs and international organizations have played an active role in addressing domestic violence in Armenia, but serious obstacles exist to preventing violence, providing women with protection from violence and holding perpetrators of violence accountable.

Considerable donor attention has focused on improving the healthcare response to domestic violence, and it is reported that many more medical professionals are now aware of the problem and specific professionals that have received training (primary health personnel, psychologists, community nurses and social workers) are able to refer patients to services run by NGOs. The Unified Family Nursing Curriculum and Unified Family Medicine Curriculum, approved by the government in 2003, both address family violence. However, interviewees stated that many physicians lack the skills needed to correctly document cases of injury as evidence for legal cases. Although medical



professionals are required to report incidents of violence to law enforcement, this practice is rare, with doctors making decisions about whether this would, in fact, be more harmful to women. It was reported that policy-makers still do not recognize domestic violence as a public health concern or a serious health risk for women, especially in the area of reproductive health.

NGOs have also provided training to law enforcement officers to improve the police response to domestic violence. For example, the Women’s Rights Center has developed a good working relationship with the local police, but such programs are not institutionalized or supported by the State. Trust in law enforcement is also low, with only 35% of women reporting that they would be likely to call the police if they experienced domestic violence.<sup>146</sup> In addition, the police are constrained by the lack of comprehensive legislation on domestic violence. General criminal prohibitions on physical violence can be applied to cases of domestic violence, but these are neutral provisions that do not recognize the relationship between victim and perpetrator. There are no civil remedies, such as a protective order, that would temporarily remove a batterer from the home. In addition, cases may be halted when the parties “reconcile,” a problematic concept that is often accompanied by family pressure. Many women resort to divorce. Divorce, however, is a limited remedy for domestic violence given women’s economic dependence on their husbands.

As a whole, the legal system is not engaged in addressing domestic violence as a serious violation of women’s rights. NGOs offer legal counseling and support for victims of violence in civil cases. Legal clinics could be another avenue of support, but the issue of domestic violence has not been a particular focus of their work. While NGOs express interest in strategic litigation around the issue of domestic violence, this is an area in which there is little expertise in Armenia.

Societal attitudes towards domestic violence mean that victims face considerable shame and stigma, are dissuaded from reporting incidents and prefer to resolve such problems without resorting to official channels. Of women who had experienced physical violence, only 29% turned to anyone for help, and of these 76.5% addressed their families. A much smaller proportion addressed the police

<sup>145</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the State Interagency Committee to Combat GBV and Second meeting of the State Interagency Committee to Combat GBV in Armenia was held in the RoA MLSA, E-News Archive, Combating Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus Project/Armenia, 12 May 2010, available at <http://www.genderbasedviolence.am/en/content/show/107/e-news-archive-.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Dallakyan, Ani and Hakobyan, Narine, *Domestic Violence and Abuse of Women in Armenia: Report on Nationwide Survey Findings*, p 78.

(17.3%) or health personnel (9.9%); however of those who turned to the health care system, 71% did so because they had physical problems (both injuries and other conditions).<sup>147</sup> The UN and Armenian NGOs have been active in organizing awareness-raising activities, for example the annual 16 Days Campaign Against GBV, public service announcements and training sessions for journalists. Further work is still needed, however, to overcome the taboo nature of domestic violence and to create a more compassionate response towards victims. A service-providing organization reported that considerably more women call or come to the center for consultations immediately after awareness-raising events. This suggests that continued publicity of such services plays a role in persuading women to seek help.

Despite the fact that women face pressure not to report violence, it is important to remember that many victims do take steps to improve their situations, and thus providing them with comprehensive



assistance is vital. Services for victims of domestic violence are provided primarily by NGO crisis centers, operating throughout the country, and include hotlines, psychological assistance, legal aid, some employment help and temporary housing. In 2002, four shelters opened in Armenia with USAID funding. However, the lack of continued donor support has meant that only one, in Yerevan, is still operational. This shelter, run by the Women's Rights Center, serves women from anywhere in Armenia and has recently established filial offices in four regions of the country to assist with referrals. The Director of the Women's Rights Center explained that although the majority of victims return home with no legal resolution of the violence, the time in the shelter is instrumental in showing them that they can leave a violent relationship and that they have support. Programs for perpetrators, which do not exist in Armenia, are also important tools in breaking the cycle of violence.

Several new initiatives to address gender-based violence are also worth noting. As mentioned above, NGOs are exploring the possibility of using the legal system more effectively to protect victims. The UNFPA is supporting a project to engage men in a movement against GBV and is working with the Armenian Apostolic Church on awareness-raising for priests and the development of community action plans for counseling on family violence.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid, pp. 86-87.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER INTEGRATION

The following section presents recommendations to be used during future programming and is based on the gender issues in Armenia that were raised during this assessment within the sectors of USAID/Armenia's strategy to FY2013. Issues to consider, specific to the planned intermediate results, follow, and recommendations related to addressing gender-based violence as a cross-cutting issues are relevant to each AO. The recommendations and considerations included in this report are intended to inspire further thought and discussion about gender integration across USAID/Armenia's program and are not comprehensive. Many of the impediments to women to achieving their full potentials in Armenian society will require multi-dimensional approaches. Lastly, several tools and resources that may be helpful in conducting sector-specific gender analysis (at the activity level, for example) are included as Annex E to this report.

### 4.1. General Considerations

Women and men face distinct differences in status, perceived roles and responsibilities and women, in particular, lack access to a variety of resources, ranging from economic to political. Objectively, Armenia has made limited progress in fulfilling international and European obligations on gender equality. The UN Development Program (UNDP) ranks Armenia 93 of 109 nations in the gender empowerment measure (GEM), an indicator of the extent to which women are active in economic and political life. In this context, USAID/Armenia faces the challenge of how to ensure that programming also works toward promoting gender equality. In program planning, it is useful, therefore, to keep in mind several overarching issues that will lead to more effective gender integration:

- Fostering women's economic independence is critical to their ability to realize other rights and to improving their status overall. Improving women's economic status will lead to greater advancement in other areas, for example ability to run for political office, to access legal services, healthcare and education, to leave violent situations, etc.
- Because women are virtually absent from cabinet and ministerial posts and the National Assembly, policy work with the Government of Armenia should include actions to ensure that women's interests are represented, through meetings with women's NGOs, civil society groups, engaging think tanks to conduct gender-sensitive research etc.
- Positive measures should be taken to ensure women take part in decision-making processes in their communities, in the employment sphere and in politics. Women's participation should not be assumed but affirmative steps for women's inclusion should be a part of program design, especially in sectors that are male-dominated.
- Consider the consequences of developing activities in fields that are dominated by either men or women; acknowledge such gender imbalances and address them.
- Ensure that programming is not reinforcing prevailing stereotypes, for example that women are responsible for family planning and childcare or are better suited to service professions.
- Develop projects that counter harmful gender-based stereotypes, through media campaigns and in educational settings.
- Evaluate the ability of men to access programs providing education/training and social services and citizen assistance given prevailing gender norms about masculinity in Armenia.
- Identify areas in which greater male participation can be encouraged, as partners in promoting gender equality generally, as role models against violent behavior and to enter non-traditional spheres such as teaching, service and caretaking professions.
- Ensure that needs-assessments, evaluations and research include gender considerations. Survey data should be disaggregated by sex, and gender differences should be cross-tabulated with overall findings.
- Include gender-sensitive indicators in the PMP to measure progress (see below).
- Strive for greater interaction with local civil society organizations, as well as other stakeholders, in setting priorities for women's issues in programming, procurement and evaluation.
- USAID/Armenia can play a positive role in encouraging the Armenian Government's recent efforts to establish gender equality mechanisms.

### 4.1.1. Gender Equality Indicators

The ADS requires gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the results of gender analysis reveal significant differences in the role and status of women and men and that the anticipated results would have a differential affect on men and women. In brief, sex-disaggregated data alone has limited use as it only provides factual information about the status of women and men at the moment the data is gathered. In contrast, gender-sensitive indicators attempt to measure gender-related changes over time. Gender-sensitive indicators should address the gender gaps and inequalities that the project is seeking to redress, take a long-term perspective, keeping in mind that social change takes time, and use participatory approaches in which women and men actively take part in the planning of performance measurement frameworks, in their implementation, and in the discussion of their findings.<sup>148</sup>

- Results should be framed in a manner that highlights impact on people (men and women; boys and girls). Indicators that are people oriented, rather than focused on systems change, will be more likely to reveal gender-specific impacts. For example, indicators on numbers of laws and policies or increased facilities (healthcare, energy infrastructure etc.) do not provide information about whether the lives of women or men have been improved or to what extent they are accessing such services.
- The results framework should use gender-inclusive, rather than gender neutral, language. People-level indicators should be disaggregated by sex. If gender analysis reveals distinct inequalities in participation of or of benefits to men and women, the program activities should be adjusted.
- Gender-sensitive indicators require the collection of data, disaggregated by sex, but it is also a good practice to disaggregate by age and socio-economic groups. To be gender-sensitive, basic data should also be accompanied by qualitative evaluations. Such evaluations can be aided by additional gender analysis or by including gender expertise among evaluators. For example, if the indicator measures numbers of people accessing courts or employment services, questions can be asked about whether access is equal, what factors cause differential access for men and women, and about differences in outcomes for women and men, etc.
- Consider the use of baseline studies to collect data at the onset of a project so that change over time can be measured. Surveys should also be used to capture information about changes in gender status (e.g. how men and women spend their time, societal perceptions about the roles of men and women, household budget expenditures and consumption rates, satisfaction of men and women with social services etc.).

## 4.2. Issues to Consider in Program Planning

### 4.2.1. Democratic Governance and Civic Participation (AO)

A healthy democracy is one in which women and men have equal opportunities to influence the governing of their country and in which their concerns are heard. At present, women in Armenia have very little influence over policy decisions due to their lack of representation in decision-making positions. While a quota system ensures women are represented in political parties, they face distinct barriers to entering office at the local and national level. While the Government of Armenia has recently begun a discussion of gender equality issues, most previous policies oriented toward improving the status of women focused on reproductive and maternal health and not civil and political rights. Gender equality is often set aside in favor of “more pressing” concerns. For these reasons, topics of women’s rights are not a part of the political agenda or even widely discussed in society. Women’s NGOs lack the capacity to advocate for their inclusion in policy decisions. The democracy and governance programs of USAID/Armenia should ensure that women have opportunities to meaningfully engage with the government and that their concerns are reflected in democratization processes.

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<sup>148</sup> See *Gender Sensitive Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators*, UNESCO, (2003).

### **Justice System (IR-1)**

- Promote Council of Europe policy on gender equality, non-discrimination and violence against women among legal professionals, including European human rights treaty obligations, recommendations and European Court of Human Rights case law.
- Support gender-sensitivity training and continuing legal education for justice system and legal professionals that includes such topics as sex-based discrimination, discrimination based on sexual orientation/ gender identity, sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Watchdog organizations and citizens should monitor the disposition of legal cases in which women are the most likely to be involved and negatively affected (e.g. family law, divorce cases, domestic violence, labor law violations).
- Develop qualitative indicators to measure gender bias in courts using such methods as interviews, review of statistical databases and court records, review of sentencing and punishment in VAW cases and courtroom monitoring.
- Support awareness-raising projects for women on their legal rights and remedies.
- Continue to support legal clinics and consider expanding legal aid and promoting *pro bono* assistance to improve women's access to justice.
- Support lobbying initiatives to promote the draft law "*On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*" and a law on domestic violence.

### **Government Policies and Services (IR-2)**

- Promote the use of gender-responsive budgeting exercises to address gaps in government policies, plans and budgets, increase accountability for public expenditures and improve women's access to services and resources.
- Promote the practice of gender-sensitive auditing of basic service delivery by NGOs or citizen groups.
- Take measures for the participation of women in the development of community strategic plans and ensure that such plans are gender sensitive.
- Provide capacity building and support for women's civil society organizations to promote their interests in government reform and to serve as monitors of government processes that impact women's rights.
- Support the Government of Armenia and other stakeholders (both NGOs and citizen groups) in the development of the Gender Policy Action Plan for 2011-2015 and initiatives at the national and local level for its implementation and monitoring.

### **Citizen Participation in Electoral Processes (IR-3)**

- Support lobbying efforts to amend the quota system for party lists to ensure that women have access to decision-making positions in politics.
- Educate political parties on the value of women's leadership in the party, the creation of mechanisms for the advancement of women within the party structure and development of issue-based campaigns that respond to the concerns of female voters.
- Develop the capacity of NGOs to engage in political work, advocacy and lobbying.
- Facilitate information exchange between NGOs that work on specific women's issues and political parties/candidates.
- Ensure the inclusion of female leaders and activists at the community level and promote their greater participation on community councils.
- Promote positive models and images of women in leadership positions using mass media outlets.
- Election monitoring programs should include observation of whether political parties are in compliance with the Election Code, including provisions on the numbers and placement of women on party lists, and analysis of election outcomes with respect to women holding political office.
- Support projects on leadership skills for girls and young women, especially in the *marzer*.

#### **Citizen Information and Activism (IR-4)**

- Support think tanks that take a gender-sensitive approach to policy analysis as well as conduct research on issues that specifically concern women (for example, constraints to businesswomen) and men (for instance, patterns of male health-seeking behavior).
- Promote professional standards of ethics and gender sensitivity in the media sector to improve the coverage of female experts and authorities in the media, to increase attention to issues of special concern to women and to challenge stereotyping and eliminate hate speech.
- Encourage citizen groups and NGOs to conduct media monitoring of such topics as the portrayal of women in the media, reinforcement of gender stereotypes, sexism and homophobia.
- Consider developing university courses for journalism students on gender-sensitive reporting.
- Promote the creation of information networks between women's NGOs and foster links between civil society organizations and mainstream media groups.

#### **4.2.2. Private Sector Competitiveness (AO)**

While the population as a whole has been affected by the recent economic recession, arguably women had not benefited to the same extent as men from earlier GDP growth in Armenia. Women are, therefore, not well positioned to benefit equally from future economic expansion. Women occupy a precarious position in terms of hiring, job retention and promotion that present obstacles to realizing their full potentials in the labor sphere. Women's access to business opportunities and financial resources is limited. They tend to work in lower-paid sectors as well as the informal economy and are on average paid less than men. Future reform projects should therefore consider special measures to improve women's economic opportunities and labor contribution. Specifically, measures should be taken to improve the life-work balance for women, address entrenched discrimination and provide incentives to support women entrepreneurs. Generally, efforts should be made to increase recognition in the private sector that efficient and competitive businesses are those that attract and retain a diverse workforce.

#### **Enterprise Efficiency and Productivity (IR-1)**

- Business advisory and development services, as well as business associations, should develop human resources policies on such issues as non-discriminatory hiring, promotion and termination practices and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Among private sector partners, promote the concept that policies that make the workplace good for women actually benefit all employees and make an enterprise more competitive.
- Promote the use of mentoring programs to assist women to take on leadership positions in the workplace.
- Assess the risks and potential negative consequences of targeting sectors that present distinct gender imbalances or in which women and men have unequal control over assets and capital.
- Invest in workplace programs that improve women's access to career advancement and encourage women in non-traditional fields.
- Seek business-sector partners that have corporate diversity strategies and employee development programs for women.<sup>149</sup>
- Develop networking sessions, internship and/or mentoring programs specifically aimed at encouraging young women (high school and university students) to enter technology and business fields, such as IT.
- Assess the gender balance in the broader information and communications technology field (ICT) to determine the extent to which women access technology, for example computers and internet, and whether any biases exist about women's role in the field.

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<sup>149</sup> For example, Microsoft has a Women Employee Resource Group with over 12,000 members worldwide. See <http://www.microsoft.com/about/diversity/en/us/programs/ergen/wam.aspx>.

### **Regulatory and Institutional Framework for Financial and Trade Service (IR-2)**

- Support analysis of gender-specific obstacles to business growth, including barriers faced by women-owned businesses and micro and small businesses where women predominate.
- Conduct analysis of gendered impact of tax and other regulations on the types of enterprises mainly owned by women, i.e. micro and small businesses, enterprises in the retail and service sectors.
- Analyze the lending market in Armenia through a gender lens to identify specific obstacles to women obtaining credit. Additional gender analysis could be conducted of value chains.
- Encourage lending institutions to track lending patterns by sex.
- Support gender sensitive solutions among lending institutions, specifically regarding access to credit, lending barriers and business support. Solutions may require regulatory reform, capacity building for financial institutions on female credit seekers, and training for women business owners or the expansion of microfinance schemes.

### **Infrastructure, Environmental and Management Practices (IR-3)**

- Integrate gender considerations, such as the different energy needs, uses and priorities of women and men, in the formulation of energy policy, in technical assistance and in project implementation.
- Increase women's participation and leadership in the Armenian energy sector, which is currently male dominated.
- At the community level, ensure that women and men have equal representation in decision-making on infrastructure improvements.
- Conduct gender and environmental impact studies that reveal the consequences to women and men living in areas where infrastructure construction projects are undertaken.
- In infrastructure improvement projects, engage women's NGOs in Armenia that address environmental issues.
- Disaggregate data by sex in reporting on energy improvement projects.
- Indicators should focus not only on outputs but also measure changes and improvements to the lives of women and men resulting from increased energy security, for example reduced time and labor spent on household chores, improved access to clean water, improved health and safety (attributable to cleaner fuels/ electric lighting), increased income generation/ food production etc.
- Support projects on energy efficiency and renewable energy at the community level that are responsive to the different consumption patterns of men and women.

#### **4.2.3. Health and Social Protection (AO)**

USAID should ensure that health and social protection services are fully available to women and men in Armenia, including to marginalized and minority groups, such as people with disabilities. Future reform of the health and social sectors should include attention to women's specific health needs, beyond maternal and reproductive health, and focus on the intersection of women's health and other social problems, such as VAW. Reform also presents an opportunity to expand health promotion messages, especially targeting men, and increase male responsibility for their own wellbeing and that of their partners and children. Pension reform efforts have the potential to reduce poverty rates among vulnerable populations, in particular elderly women, if they are carried out with gender implications in mind. The needs of disabled persons in Armenia, as well as their abilities to access social services, are not well documented.

### **Health and Social Protection Financial Resources (IR-1)**

- Promote the practice of gender-sensitive auditing of basic service delivery to determine how Armenian Government funds are allocated to health and social protection programs targeting specifically women or men and whether they are effectively addressing the needs of socially vulnerable populations.
- Disaggregate data by sex in reporting on household expenditures and individual citizen's out-of-pocket payments for health care.

- Analyze whether the pension system can equitably provide for vulnerable groups, such as women and caretakers of disabled persons, and flexibly take into consideration their time spent in unpaid work.

### **Quality of Health and Social Protection Services (IR-2)**

- Regularly analyze information obtained through the healthcare management information system for gender differences in such areas as frequency of visits to primary healthcare physicians, health conditions, payment for services, quality of patient encounters etc.
- Ensure that reproductive health, maternal and child health and family planning services are accessible to greater numbers of women, especially marginalized women, for example women living in rural areas, partners of labor migrants, disabled women, victims of domestic violence etc.
- Continue programs on maternal health and family planning and ensure that such programs address the interconnected issues of violence against women, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.
- Reintroduce activities to improve the understanding and responsiveness of healthcare professionals (including emergency workers, gynecologists, obstetricians, family practitioners, pediatricians, nurses) to violence against women, such as domestic violence and sexual assault. Work in cooperation with other donors to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach.
- Promote men’s participation in family planning and maternal and child health through activities targeting men as responsible partners.
- Ensure that men’s specific health concerns, including sexual and reproductive health, are addressed by the current system, with specific attention to vulnerable populations and underserved groups such as labor migrants, young men and MSMs.
- Analyze any barriers that men face in accessing healthcare.
- Monitor the extent to which State Employment Service Agency (SESA) services are accessible to unemployed men and whether re-training programs provide skills that match current market demands for both men and women, as well as men and women with disabilities. Additionally, monitoring could be conducted of SESA capacity to work with employers to counter entrenched stereotypes about jobs that are considered “appropriate” for only men or women and to base recruitment on standard qualifications.
- Promote training and skill-building programs for women in the IT field and also that directly address the weaknesses of female entrepreneurs.
- Facilitate the dissemination of vacancies in non-traditional fields, such as technical professions, to a wider network of potential women candidates.
- Support the creation of databases/ rosters of qualified female professionals in order to increase recruitment and promotion of women in fields in which there is gender imbalance.
- Develop indicators to measure changes in women’s employment/ unemployment rates.

### **Citizens’ Rights and Responsibilities for Health and Social Protection (IR-3)**

- Social marketing campaigns should address health issues specific to men and women and also be adapted to the needs and concerns of minority groups.
- Support gender-sensitive healthy lifestyle programs aimed at boys and girls, young men and women that address such topics as substance abuse, sexual health, negotiation and dating, family planning, tolerance and gender roles.
- Develop indicators to measure the extent to which men access specific health services.
- Develop the capacity of disabled person’s organizations to engage in political work, advocacy and lobbying around the concerns of disabled women and men.
- Public education and citizen engagement campaigns related to the pension reform process should use gender-specific approaches and messages about the new pension system.

#### **4.2.4. Cross-Cutting: Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence is a complex social problem requiring a comprehensive and long-term approach. In this assessment process, several forms of violence against women were identified in Armenia, including sex-selective abortion in favor of boys, sexual harassment in the workplace and domestic violence. Below are several general recommendations for points of intervention where VAW could be better addressed.

- VAW programs should take a multi-sectoral approach, be based on long-term commitments and aim to build public support for change.
- Determine the extent and parameters of sex-selective abortion in Armenia and then evaluate measures to address this problem in existing programs.
- In rule of law programs, support legal services for victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment. Support projects to improve the litigation of domestic violence and sexual harassment cases, through both civil and criminal causes of action, and provide training and continued legal education on violence against women to male and female law students and legal professionals.
- Watchdog and monitoring activities can be used to determine how domestic violence cases are dealt with in the law enforcement and legal systems as well as whether media coverage of the topic of violence against women helps to maintain or reduce stigma.
- Include the topic of ethical reporting on violence against women in training programs to improve the professionalism of the media.
- The topic of how local communities address domestic violence and provide services for victims can be included in projects on good governance and citizen participation.
- In enterprise-based programs, encourage the development of workplace programs against sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Further activities can be developed to improve the understanding and responsiveness of a broader spectrum of healthcare professionals (including emergency workers, gynecologists, obstetricians, family practitioners, pediatricians, nurses) to violence against women, specifically domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Health promotion messages and educational materials on healthy lifestyles aimed at both women and men should include information about gender-based violence.
- Support NGOs that provide services to victims of violence and build their capacities to address the government and advocate for reform in this area.
- Support the work of the State Interagency Committee to Combat Gender-Based Violence.
- Support activities that work with men against VAW and promote the engagement of men as role models in this area.

#### **4.3. Organizational Issues and Recommendations**

In addition to the sector-specific recommendations, which are applicable to programming, there are some areas in which USAID/Armenia could improve the overall Mission approach to gender integration and promotion of gender equality. Mission staff evidenced a good understanding of potential gender issues in their areas of expertise and articulated gender-based differences encountered in past programs. However, despite the existence of good data, this information has not been applied to analyze potential impacts at the project level or to plan for how these impacts could be addressed. There does not appear to be a strategy to enhance gender equality overall, with different sectors cooperating, but rather current USAID/Armenia programs target women directly in only two areas: political participation and maternal/reproductive health. The lack of thorough gender analysis in the economic growth sector is problematic and does not meet the ADS gender integration requirements. Areas in which women are clearly disadvantaged in employment are overlooked and reform efforts are targeting enterprises at levels and in sectors where women stand to benefit to a lesser degree than men.

Implementing partners are regularly collecting and reporting sex-disaggregated data, but information tends to be limited to the narrow topic of the numbers of women and men participating in program activities. In meetings, many implementers were able to provide deeper analysis of the implications of gender differences but explained that they are not asked to provide this information to USAID. Several implementers interviewed for this assessment expressed interest in a USAID-organized round table at which information about gender issues could be exchanged and discussed.

It appears that in the past there was little donor coordination in Armenia on gender issues, but the UN and OSCE are now taking the lead on creating a Gender Theme Group. Such a forum could prove useful in coordinating with the Government of Armenia in developing actions plans on gender equality. Several points follow, outlining issues to consider in organizing the work of USAID/Armenia:

- Ensure that “gender” is approached as a social construct of the roles, attributes and constraints associated with being male or female and not merely a requirement of equal participation of men and women in programs. Solicitations, in particular, should require a more nuanced approach to gender integration.
- Increase the capacity of USAID/Armenia and its implementing partners to undertake regular gender analysis. Specifically, expand the role of gender advisor to work directly with implementers.
- Develop expertise in gender integration within each AO team and build their capacity to interpret data and program information through a gender lens.
- Develop cross-cutting programs, as opposed to stand-alone and sector-specific programs, that will enhance women’s opportunities and status in a number of fields.
- Consider periodic trainings or meetings with implementing partners on gender integration to ensure that a common language is being used and common goals shared.
- USAID/Armenia should become a member of the Gender Theme Group.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Gender integration is a continual process that involves conducting analysis, questioning assumptions and collaboration with stakeholders. At present, Armenia is moving forward in a number of positive directions, but by not addressing serious gender disparities, the country is also failing to fully capitalize on the resources it has in its citizens and to engage with all members of the population. In reform-oriented countries, the ADS encourages consideration of national development strategies, and it is significant that the Government of Armenia has very recently taken steps to improve the dialog on gender equality. Future elaboration of national action plans on gender policy and gender-based violence represent important points where USAID/Armenia can began a cooperative dialog and also facilitate links between different organizations and entities, working in a variety of sectors, to bring about greater gender equality.

## **ANNEX A: Scope of Work**

### **Scope of Work for USAID/Armenia Gender Assessment**

#### **Background**

USAID policies require that gender considerations be incorporated in all stages of strategic planning, program design, implementation and monitoring, and in all of USAID solicitations (ADS 201, 203, 302 and 303). Currently USAID/Armenia is in the process of formulating its Assistance Objectives (AO) Results Framework to reflect the key role of gender considerations in the achievement of the objectives.

In developing the new AO Results Frameworks USAID/Armenia seeks to conduct a gender assessment to cover the two key questions guiding USAID's approach to gender analysis:

- How will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results?
- How will expected results affect the relative status of men and women?

The Mission seeks a review of available gender-related information to summarize the overall situation of men and women in Armenia, to examine how the overall situation is reflected in the Assistance Objectives, Intermediate Results and indicators, and in which areas of USAID/Mission activities gender is an important influence on expected results. In cases where gender is found to be an important influence on objectives and results, recommendations are sought on how to reflect it appropriately in respective AO narratives, and IRs and in planning for new activities to address them appropriately in their respective designs.

#### **Objective**

In preparing USAID/Armenia's Assistance Objective Results Frameworks for FY 2010-FY2013 the Mission is seeking TA to undertake a gender assessment to assist the process of gender analysis and incorporation of the findings into the AO formulation, program planning, implementation and monitoring. Specifically, the purpose of this TA is to: 1. assess USAID/Armenia AOs and IRs from gender perspective to determine areas in which gender is or is not an important influence on expected results and why; and 2. formulate detailed recommendations on how gender considerations can be integrated more systematically into the Mission's AO Results Frameworks and future project activities in areas where gender is an important influence on expected results.

#### **Tasks**

1. Conduct a gender assessment that includes the following:
  - Review existing empirical information on gender to understand the current status of men and women in Armenia;
  - Analyze each AO, Intermediate Result (IR) and indicator specified in the Results Framework for FY2010-FY2013 from gender perspective to assess whether gender has or has not an important influence on them, and substantiate findings with empirical data. Potential data sources can be related project activities currently in effect;
  - Conduct meetings/interviews with Mission staff and implementing partners to help identify and substantiate the role of gender under each of the three Mission AO's (DG, EG and IIP);
2. Based on the Gender Assessment, provide detailed recommendations on integration of gender considerations in the Mission's AOs, as well as provide guidance on gender concerns to be addressed in program design, management and monitoring cycle. The recommendations should clearly address the operationalization of gender considerations for their inclusion in the AO Results Frameworks narratives, IR and indicator formulation, and future program planning,

management and monitoring. The recommendations should at a minimum include the following elements:

- Analysis of each assistance objective and intermediate result to identify where gender considerations have a significant impact on expected results,
  - Recommendations on how disparities important to achieving expected results might be remediated through project-level analysis and design, and,
  - Technical advice on addressing the E&E Bureau Comments on the Mission's Results Frameworks regarding gender issues;
3. Meet separately with teams, team leaders, activity managers or others involved in activities that have and/or should have strong gender components to provide more in-depth advice and assistance.

### Methodology

- Prior to departure for Armenia, review documents. These will include: USAID Gender Policy documents, USAID/Armenia Assistance Strategy Results Framework for FY2010-FY2013, E&E Bureau Review Summary of USAID/Armenia AO Results Framework, background information on gender issues in Armenia, such as relevant laws and policies, existing studies and other in-country data.
- Suggested approach in conducting this gender analysis is the one proposed by the United Nations Development Programme:

(1) Sex-Disaggregated Data + (2) Analysis + (3) Gender Perspective = Gender Analysis

Suggested dimensions of the analysis are:

- Analysis of sex-disaggregated data and information
  - Assessment of roles and responsibilities/division of labor
  - Consideration of access to and control over resources
  - Examination of patterns of decision-making
  - Examination of the data using a gender perspective (i.e. the context of women and men's gender roles and relationships)
- In collecting information phase the team shall interview the following and collect related information:
    - Members of AO teams and the Program Office;
    - USAID implementers as identified by the Mission in advance and approved by the Mission;
    - Major donors or international organizations and local NGOs for supplemental information;
    - Interviews and informal discussions with other relevant stakeholders and individuals.

### Deliverables

**Gender Assessment and Recommendations:** The Gender Assessment and Recommendations will use the data from existing documents, data sets, interviews and other sources to assess the role of gender in Armenia and its significance for the Mission's AO's and programs, and make recommendations for integration of gender considerations into the Mission's AO Results Framework and future program planning.

A preliminary draft shall be submitted electronically to USAID/Armenia upon completion of fieldwork. The Mission will provide written comments to the Consultant electronically within ten working days of receipt.

A revised draft Gender Assessment & Recommendations, incorporating USAID/Armenia comments shall be submitted to USAID/Armenia not later than five working days after receiving the above comments. The Mission shall provide any additional written comments electronically within ten working days of receipt of the revised draft.

**Meetings and in-depth advice** to teams, team leaders, activity managers or others involved in activities where gender is an important influence on expected results.

### **Estimated Level of Effort**

The Scope of Work will be carried out by consultant(s) experienced in gender assessments and gender mainstreaming strategies. The level of effort will include 19 days allocated as follows:

- 3 days of preparation time to review documents
- 2 days of travel
- 7 days for data collection
- 7 days in the US to finalize report

### **Performance Period**

The consultant should be available to travel to the Mission in June 2010.

### **Desired Qualifications:**

- Thorough understanding and experience with USAID policies and procedures relating to gender assessments and gender integration;
- Demonstrated prior experience working on gender issues, particularly of gender analysis, especially in relation to USAID work in transition countries;
- Education or work experience in social sciences relevant to USAID programming;
- Thorough understanding of gender situation in Armenia, including important statistics, policies, regulations and existing reports;
- Good knowledge of other local and international organizations working in the field.
- Excellent communication skills;
- Data analysis skills;
- Excellent English writing skills, proficiency in Armenian a plus.

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## **ANNEX C: Persons Interviewed**

**June 21- July 1, 2010**

### **USAID/Armenia Mission**

#### **Program Office**

- Timothy Alexander, Director
- Mariam Gevorgyan, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

#### **Democracy and Governance Office**

- Anahit Khachatryan, Project Management Specialist
- Bella Margaryan, Project Management Specialist
- Anahit Martirosyan, Project Management Specialist

#### **Office of Economic Growth**

- Diana Avetyan, Project Management Specialist
- Simon Sargsyan, Project Management Specialist
- Marina Vardanyan, Energy, Water and Environment Officer

#### **Social Reform Office**

- Sangita Patel, Director
- Nara Ghazaryan, Project Management Specialist
- Astghik Grigoryan, Project Management Specialist
- Ruben Jamalyan, Project Management Specialist
- Volodymyr Yatsenko, Social Sector Advisor

### **USAID partner organizations by project**

- Gregg Halsted, Country Director, American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA/ROLI)
- Alex Sardar, Vice President, Counterpart
- Robert Bodo, Chief of Party, Local Government Project
- Zara Chatinyan, Team Leader, Training and Technical Assistance of Councils, Local Government Project
- François Vézina, Chief of Party, Mobilizing Action Against Corruption (MAAC)
- Eduardo Flores-Trejo, Deputy Chief of Party, MAAC
- Ara Brutian, Senior Media and Communications Specialist, MAAC
- Gegham Sarkisyan, Country Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI)
- Anna Melkonyan, Chief of Party, Youth and Community Action Program (YCAP)
- Artak Ghazaryan, Director, Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS)
- Arevik Kyokhyan, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, CAPS
- Marina Poghosyan, Business Development Specialist, CAPS
- Armen Arzumanyan, Chief of Party, Armenia Assistance to Energy Sector to Strengthen Energy Security and Regional Integration (ESRI)

- Lief Erickson, Deputy Chief of Party, ESRI
- Marina Klyan, ESRI
- Ramiro Ortega Landa, Senior Finance Management Specialist, Financial Sector Knowledge Sharing Project (FS Share)
- Margarita Hakobjanyan, Manager, FS Share
- Hripsime Amickhanyan, Program Officer, Small-Scale Infrastructure Project (SSIP)
- Lala Aslikyan, Monitoring and Evaluation, SSIP
- Hasmik Sargsyan, Projects Coordinator, SSIP
- Aram Muradyan, Chief of Party, Technical Assistance to Support Tax Administration Reform (TASTAR)
- Vahagn Aganikian, Tax Administration Expert, TASTAR
- Armine Babaian, Senior Tax Administration Expert, TASTAR
- Ruzanna Marukyan, IT Advisor, TASTAR
- Khachanush Hakobyan, Executive Director, Armenian-American Wellness Center
- Inna Sacci, Chief of Party, NOVA 2
- Gohar Panajyan, Quality Healthcare Services Senior Expert, NOVA 2
- Dan Wartonick, Chief of Party, Pension and Labor Market (PALM)
- Astghik Mirzakhanyan, Deputy Chief of Party, PALM
- Jane Daly, Labor Market Team Leader, PALM
- Gayane Dallakyan, Project Management Expert, PALM
- Susanna Karapetyan, Labor Market and Pension Advisor, PALM
- Tigran Tananyan, Employment Services Advisor, PALM
- Gayane Gharagebakyan, Acting Chief of Party, Primary Healthcare Reform Project (PHRP)
- Karine Gabrielyan, Team Leader for Family Medicine and Quality of Care Component, PHRP
- Graham Strong, National Director, World Vision
- Iveta Dartyan, Coordinator of Projects on Education, World Vision
- Tatevik Davtyan, Advocacy and Gender Expert, World Vision
- Romanos Harutyunyan, Child Protection Expert, World Vision

### **International organizations**

- Tsovinar Haratyunyan, Senior Democratization Expert, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- Jina Sargizova, National Project Coordinator, “Combating Gender Based Violence in the South Caucasus” project, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Gayane Yenokyan, Project Local Coordinator, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

### **Non-governmental organizations**

- Richard Giragosian, Director, The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS)
- Mamikon Hovsepyan, Project Director, Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK)
- Marine Margaryan, Project Coordinator, PINK
- Gagik Vardanyan, Executive Director, Microenterprise Development Fund “Kamurj”
- Susana Vardanyan, President, Women’s Rights Center
- Yelena Vardanyan, Chairperson, Committee on Gender and Demographics, Public Council

### **Other professionals**

- Tiruhi Nazaretyan, Attorney (advocate)

## **ANNEX D: USAID Gender Requirements**

### **High-level Planning (ADS 201.3.9.3)**

- USAID staff must conduct a mandatory gender analysis to inform strategic plans and assistance objectives. USAID's approach to gender analysis is built around two key questions:
  - How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?
  - How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

### **Project/Activity Planning (ADS 201.3.11.6)**

- USAID staff must conduct a mandatory gender analysis to inform the design of activities and projects.
- The gender analysis findings must be integrated into the scope of work/program description for an activity that will be implemented through a contract or cooperative agreement.
- Gender issues must be integrated into the technical evaluation/selection criteria for any solicitation financed under the project or activity.
- If the planning process indicates that gender is not an issue in a planned activity or project, then a rationale must be included in the Activity Approval Document (required for the activity/project to move into the procurement phase).

### **Project and Activity Procurement (ADS 302.3.5.15 for contracts and ADS 303.3.6.3 for grants and cooperative agreements)**

- The Contract/Agreement Officer must ensure that the technical office integrates gender issues in the procurement request or includes a rationale for not addressing gender in the project or activity.
- Gender issues must be integrated in the different components of an RFP (e.g., Statement of Work, project deliverables, key personnel qualifications, monitoring and evaluation requirements), or an RFA (e.g., Program Description, key personnel qualifications, monitoring and evaluation requirements).
- The Contract/Agreement Officer must ensure that once gender has been integrated into the solicitation components, gender is also reflected in the corresponding technical evaluation criteria (RFPs) or technical selection criteria (APSSs). These technical criteria include, but are not limited to, technical understanding and approach, monitoring and evaluation, and personnel.

### **Project and Activity Monitoring and Evaluation (ADS 203.3.4.3)**

- Performance management systems and evaluations at the assistance objective and project/activity levels must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data.

## ANNEX E: Tools and Resources for Gender Analysis

The following is a list of selected resources and tools to assist with sector-specific gender analysis and integration. These materials were chosen because they provide both general guidance and information about key gender issues by topic. Several of the guides address monitoring and evaluation and the formulation of gender-sensitive indicators by sector. Additionally, tools on good practices were also selected as they include useful frameworks and background information that can assist with formulating questions for gender analysis.

### Gender Analysis and Integration

- **Guide to Gender Integration and Analysis: Additional Help for ADS Chapters 201 and 203**, USAID/EGAT/WID, (2010).  
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/201sab.pdf>
- **Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit**, UNDP, (2007).  
*Part I: Guidance and Basic Principles*  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/show/6D8DE77F-F203-1EE9-B2E5652990E8B4B9>  
  
*Part II: Sectoral Briefs*  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/show/6D8DE77F-F203-1EE9-B2E5652990E8B4B9>
- **Gender Tool Kit - Instruments for Gender Mainstreaming**, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). *Includes gender analysis tools, analytical frameworks, gender in program planning and M&E.*  
[http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Gender/General\\_and\\_thematic\\_tools/General\\_tools](http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Themes/Gender/General_and_thematic_tools/General_tools)
- **Gender Tip Sheets**, OECD/ SIDA/ AusAID. *Over 40 tip sheets on gender mainstreaming, program management and sector specific guidance.*  
[http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34541\\_1896290\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/34/0,3343,en_2649_34541_1896290_1_1_1_1,00.html)

### Gender- Sensitive Indicators and Impact Evaluation

- **Guide to Gender Sensitive Indicators**, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), (1997).  
[http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/inet/images.nsf/vLUIImages/Policy/\\$file/WID-GUID-E.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/inet/images.nsf/vLUIImages/Policy/$file/WID-GUID-E.pdf)
- **A User's Guide to Measuring Gender-Sensitive Basic Service Delivery**, UNDP/ UNIFEM, (2009). [http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs08/users\\_guide\\_measuring\\_gender.pdf](http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs08/users_guide_measuring_gender.pdf)

### Crosscutting Themes

#### *European Policy on Gender Equality*

- **Council of Europe Equality between Women and Men website:**  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/default_en.asp)

- **European Union Equality between Men and Women website:**  
[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/index_en.htm)

### *Male Engagement*

- **The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality**, UNIFEM, (2008).  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/W2000andBeyond.html>

### *Inclusion and Tolerance*

- **Building an Inclusive Development Community: a Manual on Including People with Disabilities in International Development Programs, Building an Inclusive Development Community**, Mobility International USA (MIUSA), (2003).  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/gender/wwd\\_resources.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/gender/wwd_resources.html)
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Development**, SIDA, (2005).  
[http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country\\_by\\_country/sweden/sexual\\_orientation\\_and\\_gender\\_identity\\_issues\\_in\\_development](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/sweden/sexual_orientation_and_gender_identity_issues_in_development)

### *Violence against Women*

- **Toolkit for Integrating Domestic Violence Activities into Programming in Europe and Eurasia**, USAID/DGST/E&E, (2009).  
[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/dem\\_gov/docs/ee\\_dv\\_toolkit\\_final.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/docs/ee_dv_toolkit_final.pdf)
- **Violence against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators**, USAID/ IGWG/ Measure Evaluation, (2008).  
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/tools/gender/violence-against-women-and-girls-compendium-of-indicators>  
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications/pdf/ms-08-30.pdf>

### Democracy and Governance

- **Enhancing Women's Political Participation: A Policy Note for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States**, UNDP, (2009).  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/gender/show/0C8EA77B-F203-1EE9-B1FAD9B9E682DD1E>
- **Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism**, International Federation of Journalists/ UNESCO (2009).  
<http://www.ifj.org/assets/docs/129/002/c98b281-47dbb02.pdf>
- **Justice Reform and Gender**, DCAF/ OSCE-ODIHR/ UN-INSTRAW, (2008). *Tool 4 of the Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*.  
<http://www.dcaf.ch/gender-security-sector-reform/gssr-toolkit.cfm?navsub1=37&navsub2=3&nav1=3>  
<http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/details.cfm?ord279=title&q279=gender&lng=en&id=47396&nav1=4>

- **Budgeting for Women’s Rights: Monitoring Government Budgets for Compliance with CEDAW**, UNIFEM, (2006).  
[http://www.unifem.org/materials/item\\_detail.php?ProductID=132](http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=132)

### **Economic Development**

- **Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business**, UNIFEM, (2010).  
[http://www.unifem.org/materials/item\\_detail.php?ProductID=166](http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=166)
- **Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners**, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank, (2010).  
[http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/sustainability.nsf/Content/Publications\\_Report\\_GenderDimensions\\_Guide](http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/sustainability.nsf/Content/Publications_Report_GenderDimensions_Guide)
- **Gender and Economic Value Chains: Two Case Studies from the GATE Project**, USAID/EGAT/WID.
- **Women and the Value Chain Approach**, USAID.  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/eg/gate\\_valuechain.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/eg/gate_valuechain.html)  
[http://apps.develebridge.net/amap/index.php/Women\\_and\\_the\\_Value\\_Chain\\_Approach](http://apps.develebridge.net/amap/index.php/Women_and_the_Value_Chain_Approach)
- **Factsheet: Why care about Taxation and Gender Equality?**, Programme Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights/ GTZ, (2009).  
<http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/gtz2009-0497en-gender-equality-factsheet.pdf>  
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/39/44896295.pdf>
- **Gender, Information Technology and Developing Countries: An Analytic Study**, USAID/EGAT/WID (2001). [under “Global Publications”]  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/ict/pubs.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/ict/pubs.html)
- **Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Economic Growth/Trade-Related Activities**, USAID.  
[http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADL088.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADL088.pdf)

### **Health**

- **Gender Perspectives Improve Reproductive Health Outcomes: New Evidence**, USAID/IGWG, (2009).  
[http://www.igwg.org/igwg\\_media/genderperspectives.pdf](http://www.igwg.org/igwg_media/genderperspectives.pdf)
- **Engaging Men for Gender Equality and Improved Reproductive Health**, USAID/IGWG, (2009).  
[http://www.igwg.org/igwg\\_media/engag-men-gendr-equal.pdf](http://www.igwg.org/igwg_media/engag-men-gendr-equal.pdf)
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through USAID’s Health Programs: A Guide for Health Sector Program Officers**, USAID/IGWG, (2008).  
[http://www.igwg.org/igwg\\_media/GBVGuide08\\_English.pdf](http://www.igwg.org/igwg_media/GBVGuide08_English.pdf)

## **Energy**

- **Gender and Energy for Sustainable Development: A toolkit and resource guide**, UNDP, (2004).  
<http://www.undp.org/energy/genenergykit/>  
<http://www.undp.org/energy/genenergykit/genderengtoolkit.pdf>

## **Environment**

- **Gender and Environment: A guide to the integration of gender aspects in the OSCE's environmental projects**, OSCE, (2009).  
[http://www.osce.org/gender/item\\_11\\_36575.html](http://www.osce.org/gender/item_11_36575.html)



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