Final Project Evaluation

Securing Livelihoods for Vulnerable Women, Men and Children, through their Participation in Community Governance of Water Resources, and Enhanced Ability to Use Water Efficiently
October 2015 – June 2018

Prepared for UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office – June 2018

Andrea Lee Esser, International Consultant
Elmira Kerimalieva, National Consultant

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Acronyms

AO	Ayil Okmotu
AIMAK	E-Governance System developed by project ('Territory' in Krygyz)
BCP	Building Constituency for Peace Project
CC	Coordination Council
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
HH	Household
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
LSG	Local Self Governments
MPF	My Prosperous Farm
MSPS	My Safe and Peaceful School
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RAS JA	Rural Advisory Services of Jalalabad
SHG	Self-Help Groups
ToC	Theory of Change
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAW	Violence Against Women
WUA	Water Users Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to thank the participants of the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project as well as the representatives of national and international stakeholders who took their time to share their opinions and experiences related to the project.

The evaluation team extends special thanks to the staff of the UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan and the Rural Advisory Services in Jalalabad for facilitation support provided during the field mission to arrange for inputs from stakeholders and beneficiaries in three villages and two cities. The evaluation would not have been possible without this stellar organizational and logistical support.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the project "Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources, and enhanced ability to use water efficiently" ("Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water") implemented from October 2015 to June 2018 by the UN Women Kyrgyz Republic (KR) Country Office and the Responsible Party, Rural Advisory Services of Jalalabad. The project is part of the broader FinWaterWEI II program that is implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with funding support from the Government of Finland.

Project Background and Overview

The "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project was implemented in seven municipalities of three provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic. The project aimed to secure livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources.

The project worked toward empowering the vulnerable and excluded rights-holders, and capacitating duty-bearers within the WUA and LSG to achieve two outcomes and four outputs within an overall goal of securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources:

> _Outcome 1_: People in target communities have started adopting measures for equitable and efficient water use in their households/gardens.
>
>> _Output 1.1_: Secondary school students in selected areas have demonstrated safer and more efficient agricultural practice in their communities.
>>
>> _Output 1.2_: Students have acquired advocacy and communication for change skills to influence attitude change in their communities in favour of more equitable and efficient use of natural resources.
>
> _Outcome 2_: Capacitated local self-government and Water Users Associations in target areas provide equal access to resources and enhanced services to the population.
>
>> _Output 2.1_: Local self-governments have started using electronic database management information system 'Berkut' with updated list of people eligible for social allowances.
>>
>> _Output 2.2_: WUAs have increased water fee collection as a result of improved user accounting and billing incorporated into 'Berkut'.

In 2017, the project added a new output on hygiene and sanitation in schools as follows:

> *Output 1.3: Secondary school students in 13 schools have equal access to better WASH facilities and knowledge on WASH management.*

Objectives and Design of the Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted in May and June of 2018 in the final months of project implementation. The design was informed by a set of 20 questions grouped under four rubrics of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. An analysis of how human rights based approaches and gender equality was operationalized in project design and implementation was given focus across all elements. ¦SEP¦

The evaluation process included a data collection mission in Bishkek, Osh and three selected project sites within three provinces. Project sites were selected to ensure geographic and agro-ecological diversity as well as variations in socio-cultural patterns and accessibility to natural resources. The evaluation team conducted research with a total of 153 (122 female/31 male) stakeholders and beneficiaries over the five-day field mission.

The evaluation used mixed data collection methods to include both qualitative and quantitative data. The primary focus of the field mission was to generate new qualitative data, and to verify and gather relevant quantitative data. The team utilized desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Relevance. The project worked to support key national development strategies and international commitments while remaining highly relevant to the needs of the target communities, including the most vulnerable beneficiaries. Project relevance was enhanced by capitalizing on UN Women's comparative advantage to make critical linkages between the policy and grassroots levels, thereby allowing the project to serve as a model for operationalizing national commitments to natural resource management, participatory local governance, gender equality and human rights attainment.

Effectiveness. The project delivered its planned results, and met or exceeded the intent of the project indicators at the outcome and output level. Key factors found to have a positive impact on project performance included:

- A **strategic shift in thinking** in design away from a focus on scarcity of water to address the fair distribution of limited water resources.

- Sound **site selection process** identified communities that were ready and willing to make changes in how they functioned.

- Focus on strengthening and building **greater connectivity between institutions**.

- A **hands-on approach to community development** coupled with a **step-by-step approach to learning** that built people's **confidence** and belief in themselves, leading to **empowerment**.

The project succeeding in building the capacities of rights-holders, especially students and marginalized women, to advocate for and claim their rights to fair water allocation. The project was able to improve the capacities of duty-bearers to increase the transparency and accuracy of service delivery while ensuring a special focus on vulnerable women and men. The strategy of empowering youth and engaging LSGs to advocate for gender equality and human rights made a positive contribution to community stability.

The results framework failed to capture some of the projects most significant successes, particularly in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, and was of limited use in guiding project activities, particularly at the outcome level.

Efficiency. The project strategically allocated resources to achieve and exceed the planned outcomes. Project efficiency was enhanced by a design and implementation strategy that leveraged off of relevant models within the country. Outputs were delivered in a timely manner despite some delays in start-up activities and filling some staff positions in the first year of implementation.

The management structure supported project efficiency, with UN Women and RAS JA working effectively as a team to tackle challenges and deliver results under the guidance of the Coordination Council. High levels of staff competence and commitment, coupled with low turnover rates, further enhanced efficiency.

Sustainability. Project benefits are likely to continue for a reasonably long period of time after the project close. Identified changes in behaviours should continue to impact positively on target municipalities well into the future.

Stakeholders expanded the visibility of successful practices and promoted replication within and between communities. The MSF/MSPS and AIMAK components, in particular, hold good promise for up-scaling to the national level. Representatives from key national agencies displayed high degrees of ownership over the project, and are likely to take forward relevant aspects of the project within their own institutions and spheres of expertise.

The project design successfully embedded the exit philosophy within operations to foster sustainability at the close of the project, leaving behind a critical mass of empowered change agents to continue without further external inputs. A smooth

handover will require ensuring local control over key electronic resources (software, templates and materials) at project close.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Pilot New Efforts to Reach Challenging Communities/ Institutions. Future projects should build on the effective model of community development to expand to 'challenge' communities or institutions that do not meet 'readiness' criteria. Projects may include 'challenge' communities (or 'challenge' institutions such as schools) as a means of testing new ideas for working effectively in more difficult contexts and reaching those furthest behind.

Recommendation 2 – Engage Stakeholders Actively from the Start. Future projects should involve government and civil society stakeholders in field-level project oversight from the inception phase of the project, and budgets should be drafted accordingly. Stakeholders should also be engaged in design of M&E frameworks to provide strategic inputs into data availability as well as alignment with Government policies.

Recommendation 3 – Prioritize M&E at Design, Implementation and End Phase. Dedicate the necessary human and financial resources up front to build a better M&E system that has smart indicators that accurately reflect the intended project results and are in line with stakeholder policies. Ensure that outcome indicators are monitored during the project to be able to serve as guides. Outsource key monitoring elements such as surveys to independent external experts for greater reliability and impartiality.

Recommendation 4 – Continue Work to Upscale AIMAK Personnel who have been engaged in the e-governance component may create a formal 'sharing' mechanism (such as a social media group or a list of email recipients) to ensure that communication remains open formally, thereby helping spur momentum and allowing each stakeholder to leverage off of the work of others as opportunities emerge. Linkages should also be maintained with community level users. Recommendations drafted collectively by the responsible secretaries of the seven project municipalities related to the local level needs to support e-governance systems should be carried forward.

Recommendation 5 – Further Support Self-Help Groups. Provide more comprehensive, individualized support to SHGs at close of project to look at annual work plans and sustainability plans, and identify resource needs and avenues of support after the close of project. Ensure linkages are well established between the LSG and SHGs, so that the LSGs can provide oversight and support over the next stage. Provide small funding at project close for RAS JA to continue to moderate SHG groups and to support group functions, working to transition groups into new operations on social media with leaders serving as moderators.

Recommendations 6 – Facilitate Formal Handover of Electronic Resources.

Key stakeholders at the community level must be provided with necessary electronic resources to continue operations in the post-project period. Create a 'handover list' of all electronic resources, and the appropriate recipient to ensure that tools go directly to the responsible stakeholder institution.

Recommendation 7 – Leverage off of RAS JA Strengths to Build Capacities of RAS Network. Future project work with RAS JA should consider providing opportunities for RAS in target provinces to develop their capacities through project involvement and collaboration with RAS JA, thereby strengthening the national network of RAS and improving rural community access to resources within provinces.

1 - Background

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the project "Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources, and enhanced ability to use water efficiently".[1] The project was implemented from October 2015 to June 2018 by the UN Women Kyrgyz Republic (KR) Country Office and the Responsible Party, Rural Advisory Services of Jalalabad.

The project is part of the broader FinWaterWEI II program that is implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with funding support from the Government of Finland. FinWaterWEI II promotes the priority areas of Finland's Development Policy Programme including a democratic and accountable society that promotes human rights; an inclusive green economy that promotes employment; sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection; and human development. The overall objective of the Programme is to enhance water security in the region through equitable and integrated management of water resources. The Programme promotes a rights-based approach to water use and water management that aims to lead to four Key Results:

> 1: Improved application of integrated management of water resources and strengthened basis for transboundary cooperation;
> 2: Reinforced capacity of the water, environment and health administrations to monitor the quality and quantity of waters;
> 3: Enhanced adaptive capacity and preparedness towards climate variability and change; and
> 4: Improved capacity of rights holders – including the poorest and other vulnerable groups – to understand and realize their rights and responsibilities towards water.

The "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project was designed to contribute to the achievement of the 4th Key Result as it is focused on securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources. The project also contributed to the 3rd Key Result by developing the capacities of local institutions to manage water resources in preparedness for projected changes based on climate change models.

The evaluation was commissioned by the UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office, and was conducted in May – June 2018 during the final months of project implementation. The findings of the evaluation will inform effective programming approaches to women, peace and security, organizational learning and accountability, and will contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Note of the

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[1] The short title of the project used throughout this document is "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water".

UN Women Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the UN Women staff and personnel at the Kyrgyzstan Country Office, the Responsible Party, government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, as well as donor and other development partners. The information generated by the evaluation will furthermore be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to sustain peace and conflict-prevention with a particular focus on engaging adolescents and women in dialogues on gender equality, human rights, natural resource management and peace and security.

2 - Project Context and Objectives

2.1 Local Context

Kyrgyzstan's rural areas are characterized by high population growth coupled with high rates of outmigration as men and women seek to secure jobs in neighbouring countries and the capital, Bishkek. Those remaining in rural areas (more females than males) are left to piece together a living in the context of scarce water resources, stagnant agricultural production and processing overlaid by a pattern of impunity for the influential to serve their own interests, usually to the detriment of those less powerful.

The Kyrgyz Republic is an agrarian country in which the majority of the population resides in rural areas, where the poverty level is higher. Temperature variations due to climate change are expected to cause decreasing water resources, and to require amelioration in the form of soil quality, seed quality, and agriculture growing and harvesting to ensure the country's food security. According to UN demographic models that look at population growth levels and existing water usage practice, the Kyrgyz Republic will experience a shortage of water resources for irrigation by 2075 in the event of temperature increases by four degrees Celsius.[2] Water originating from Kyrgyzstan's mountains is already a key issue of concern and conflict in Kyrgyzstan's border areas, particularly with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

While some efforts have been made over the post-independence period to rehabilitate state water infrastructure and establish community level water governance through Water Users Associations, there has not been a specific focus on integrating excluded and vulnerable sectors of the rural populations in water governance systems in line with current legal frameworks and commitments.

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[2] As referenced in "Priority Directions for Adaptation to Climate Change In the Kyrgyz Republic til 2017" approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated October 2, 2013 No. 549.

2.2 Project Objectives

The "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project was implemented in seven municipalities of three provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic. The project aimed to secure livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources. The project was perceived as a model to showcase means of inclusive community level water management and efficient water use resulting in sustainable livelihoods for households whose members are increasingly aware of the benefits of the rule of law, human, rights and gender equality in building prosperous and harmonious families and communities. Specifically, the project worked with:

> *Rights Holders: to prepare vulnerable women as well as school students to understand the efficient use of water and build skills to be successful farmer entrepreneurs using scarce water and land resources efficiently and effectively; and*

> *Duty Bearers: to ensure that Local Self-Government (LSG) and Water Users Associations (WUA) carry out their respective functions and ensure the benefits are distributed fairly with broad levels of participation in governance, including traditionally excluded or vulnerable groups.*

2.3 Project TOC and Expected Results

The project TOC illustrates linkages between greater participation and empowerment of marginalized sectors of society to enhanced access to resource and improved health and prosperity.

> "…. **If** excluded sectors of the rural population in particular women and girls are empowered to productively use limited on-farm water resources for starting to build livelihoods in an environment where communities appreciate inclusion and water conservation, **then** they will be healthier and more prosperous. The increased knowledge and economic opportunities will lead to increased participation of target groups in water management activities which will ultimately enhance the local power relationships in favour of the presently excluded, resulting in enhanced access to water resources to secure sustainable livelihoods."

The project worked toward empowering the vulnerable and excluded rights holders, and capacitating duty bearers within the WUA and LSG to achieve the following two outcomes and four outputs within an overall goal of securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources:

> *Outcome 1: People in target communities have started adopting measures for equitable and efficient water use in their households/gardens.*

>> *Output 1.1: Secondary school students in selected areas have demonstrated safer and more efficient agricultural practice in their communities.*

>> *Output 1.2: Students have acquired advocacy and communication for change skills to influence attitude change in their communities in favour of more equitable and efficient use of natural resources.*

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Outcome 2: Capacitated local self-government and Water Users Associations in target areas provide equal access to resources and enhanced services to the population.

> *Output 2.1: Local self-governments have started using electronic database management information system 'Berkut' with updated list of people eligible for social allowances.*

> *Output 2.2: WUAs have increased water fee collection as a result of improved user accounting and billing incorporated into 'Berkut'.*

In 2017, the project added a new output on hygiene and sanitation in schools as follows:

> *Output 1.3: Secondary school students in 13 schools have equal access to better WASH facilities and knowledge on WASH management.*

2.4 Project Implementation

The project was originally designed to be operationalized within two inter-related arenas as follows:

1. ***Prepare girls and boys to value the efficient use of water, understand topical issues such as how climate change affects them, and build skills to be successful farmer entrepreneurs using scarce water and land resources efficiently and effectively.*** To deliver this component, the manual *'My Prosperous Farm'* was expanded to feature chapters on efficient water use, climate change and how it affects communities in Kyrgyzstan, the workings of Water Users' Associations (WUA), and local level conflict over water. Students were prepared with knowledge to understand the situation pertaining to water in their community and engage in action and advocacy regarding the fair allocation and efficient and effective use of water. Students were further engaged in the *My Safe and Peaceful School* course that builds conflict resolution and analytical skills, trains students on participatory social research methodologies and empowers youth to promote gender equality and peace-building. Renewable energy initiatives in the form of 'green technology' and conservation were introduced to youth in response to local challenges faced by climate change.

2. ***Ensure that Local Self-Government carries out its oversight functions over WUA and the equal participation of all, including traditionally excluded or vulnerable groups.*** To this end, the LSG database *'Berkut'* was updated and expanded to include a model on WUA ensuring the accurate identification of vulnerable members of the community as a precursor to ensuring those in need receive the relevant allowances, and that fair access to water is provided for everyone.[3] Additionally, the structure and capacity of WUAs to perform their functions was enhanced with broader

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[3] "*Berkut* functioned since 2005 to identify the *muktazh* (vulnerable according to state classification) so that they would receive state allowances due.

community participation and fairer mechanisms for water allocation and user fee collection. The updated database is named AIMAK.

The project adapted along the course of its implementation in response to new opportunities as well as challenges that emerged. For example, a specialized database was designed for the WUAs when it was understood that the one designed for the LSG would not be usable by the WUA. A WASH component was added to 14 of the 15 project schools in 2017, and a total of 14 self-help groups (SHG) were formed (two to three in each municipality) to explicitly address the needs of vulnerable women. The executing agency, RAS Jalalabad, had the lead responsibility for implementation of each component with the exception of the MSPS module, which was directly implemented by UN Women CO.

Table 1- Overview of Project Components and Lead Responsibilities

Project Component	Implementing Agency
LSG - e-governance (AIMAK)	*RAS JA*
Water Users Associations	*RAS JA*
Self-Help Groups	*RAS JA*
My Safe and Peaceful School	*UN Women CO*
My Prosperous Farm	*RAS JA*
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	*RAS JA*

2.5 Project Geographical Coverage

A total of seven municipalities were selected during the early phases of the project. Decision-making was based on an in-depth assessment of potential sites against six selection criteria conducted by the Responsible Party with consultations and inputs by the Coordination Council. UN Women confirmed through field missions the interests of district and provincial administrations prior to confirmation of municipalities in their respective regions. Site selection criteria included:

- Agro-ecological suitability;
- Status and predictable change of seasonal water resource availability;
- Commitment to assume ownership, including financial contribution at LSG, community and beneficiary level;
- Readiness of Social Worker to carry out statutory social passportisation functions;
- WUA confirming equal access to water resources for anyone in catchment area; and Willingness/interest of community to practice minimum standards of sanitation.

Municipalities were consulted and considered carefully via an expanded search that allowed for numerous sites to be considered. Some initial sites were reconsidered based on new information and broader consultations under the guidance of the CC.

Community readiness was a key factor in final selections, and criteria included qualitative assessments of degrees of openness and enthusiasm of key officials as well as demonstrated commitment to project values and operational procedures.

Table 2 – Final Selection of Project Sites

Province	Municipality	Description
Osh	Don Bulak	Highland, multiethnic community, dense population, good market access.
	Check-Abad	Lowland, multiethnic community, dense population, scarce access to irrigation water, borders with Uzbekistan.
	Naiman	Lowland, high rate of migration, well water with no access to river water irrigation
Batken	Uch-Korgon	Lowland, dense population, multiethnic, high potential for agricultural activities, borders with Uzbekistan
	Khalmion	Lowland, dense population, multiethnic, high potential for agricultural activities, borders with Uzbekistan
	Kulundu	Lowland, dense population, multiethnic, high potential for agricultural activities, scarce access to water resources, inefficient use of water resources, borders with Tajikistan
Chui	Asyl-Bash	Highland, northern community, mono-ethnic, issues with inefficient use of available resources, good access to the markets

2.6 Project Management

The project was managed by UN Women. The Responsible Party (RAS JA) and UN Women were responsible for delivering different outputs, with joint responsibility for achieving outcomes. The project was managed by a National Project Coordinator based in UN Women under the oversight of an International Programme Specialist. Project Coordinators based in UN Women and RAS JA were supported by project teams that included field consultants and technical specialists, who worked closely with communities on various project components. Oversight and guidance was provided by the Coordination Council, which included representatives from key government agencies, civil society, UN Women, RAS JA and the Finnish Government.

2.7 Budget

The total project budget was EUR 1,008,000 comprised of 988,000 EUR funding from the Government of Finland within the "Programme for Finland's Water Sector Support to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan" (FinWaterWEI II 2014-2018) and UN Women contribution of 20,000 EUR.

3 - Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the project activities from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability. The findings of the evaluation will inform effective programming, refining future approaches to women, peace and security, organizational learning and accountability, and thus contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Note of the UN Women Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022.

Targeted users of the evaluation are UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office, the Responsible Party, government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, other UN agencies, development partners present in Kyrgyzstan and the ECA region, and the donor, Finland. The information generated by the evaluation will furthermore be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to sustain peace and conflict-prevention with a particular focus on engaging adolescents and women in dialogues on gender equality, human rights, and peace and security.

3.2 Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation is designed to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project with a forward-looking view toward leveraging off of lessons learned.

Specific objectives as identified in the terms of reference for the evaluation are to:

- Analyse the **relevance** of the project strategy and approach at local and national levels on gender equality and women's empowerment, peace building agenda, and adaptation to climate change.

- Assess **effectiveness** and organizational **efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the intervention.

- Assess the **sustainability** of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality through the target group.

- Analyze how **human rights** based approach and **gender equality** principles are integrated in the project implementation.

- Assess how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

- Identify and document **lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges** within the project, to inform future UN Women Country Office programming in the frameworks of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and beyond.

- ldentify strategies for **replication and up-scaling** of the project's best practices.

- Provide actionable **recommendations** with respect to UN Women's work on peace and security in Kyrgyzstan, youth, peace building and beyond.

The evaluation has been informed and organized by a set of 20 questions grouped under four rubrics of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The list of evaluation questions is provided in Annexes A and B. ⌊SEP⌋An analysis of how human rights based approaches and gender equality was operationalized in project design and implementation was given focus across all elements of the evaluation in line with the mandates of the donor and implementing agency and the UN Women Evaluation Policy. ⌊SEP⌋

3.3 Evaluation Scope

The final evaluation of the project 'Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water' was conducted at the end of project implementation and covered the entire duration of the project from 2015-2018. The evaluation took place between May and June 2018. The focus was on identifying project strengths and successes as well as weaknesses and hindering factors to extrapolate lessons learned and recommendations going forward.

The evaluation process included a data collection mission in Bishkek, Osh and three selected project sites within three provinces (two in the south and one in the north). Project sites were selected to ensure geographic and agro-ecological diversity as well as variations in socio-cultural patterns and accessibility to natural resources. Project sites that were evaluated under the BCP project in 2016 were excluded on the basis of secondary data availability. Site selection was also limited by logistical issues and travel times, leading to the exclusion of one site that required a full day of travel to reach, which was not possible within the tight timeframe allowed for the field work.

Table 3 - Field Visit Sites

Province and Municipality	Geography	Description
Osh Province, Naiman	Southern lowland	Mainly agricultural, ex-industrial area with high rate of migration; no access to irrigation water from rivers; water comes from wells. No WUA; local activists maintain water management. High degree

		of activism of youth and women. Municipality is headed by a woman in a country where less than one percent of the municipalities are led by women.
Batken Province, Khalmion	Southern lowland, borders with Uzbekistan	Densely populated; multi-ethnic; high potential for agricultural activities. Very active WUA; SHG of women and school children.
Chui Province, Asyl-Bash	Northern highland	Mono-ethnic, reasonable market access. Issues with inefficient use of available water. Women are often culturally more independent than in the South.

4 - Evaluation Methodology

This section presents an overview on the structure and guiding principles informing the evaluation design and conduct. It furthermore outlines the methodology and limitations encountered. Refer to Annex A for the TOR of the evaluation.

4.1 Evaluation Management

The Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) provided strategic direction over the course of the assessment under the coordination of the Evaluation Manager. The EMG and ERG were briefed separately on the evaluation design and preliminary findings during the field mission to ensure participation and quality control over the evaluation process. The evaluation process was also supported by the UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist for Europe and Central Asia, who is a member of the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

4.2 Evaluation Guiding Principles

The evaluation was conducted by an independent team who were informed in their work by the following guiding principles:

- **Independence** and **Objectivity** of evaluators with regard to the project and activities evaluated;
- **Integrity** of evaluators to ensure fairness of the findings;
- **Evidence-based Inquiry** to properly document, justify and legitimize the findings;
- Broad **Stakeholder and Beneficiary Participation** to ensure the findings reflect the different interests and perspectives of diverse partners; and
- **Respect** for the rights, privacy, dignity and value of participant experiences and opinions.

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy, and in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.[4]

4.3 Evaluation Design

The evaluation focused on capturing findings and lessons based on operations during the project implementation period in line with the 20 questions identified in the evaluation framework. The evaluation team looked at the project ToC, and the planned outcomes and outputs to offer benchmarks from which to gauge actual against planned results. The team transformed the prose-style ToC that informed

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[4] UN Women, *Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (UNW/2012/12).
 United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines.
    http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=102
UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.
    http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=100

project design into a visual map to improve clarity and ensure common understanding. The ToC map was utilized in the ERG workshop and confirmed by stakeholders as an accurate portrayal of the theoretical change patterns that underpinned the project.

Diagram 4 – Visual Map of Project ToC
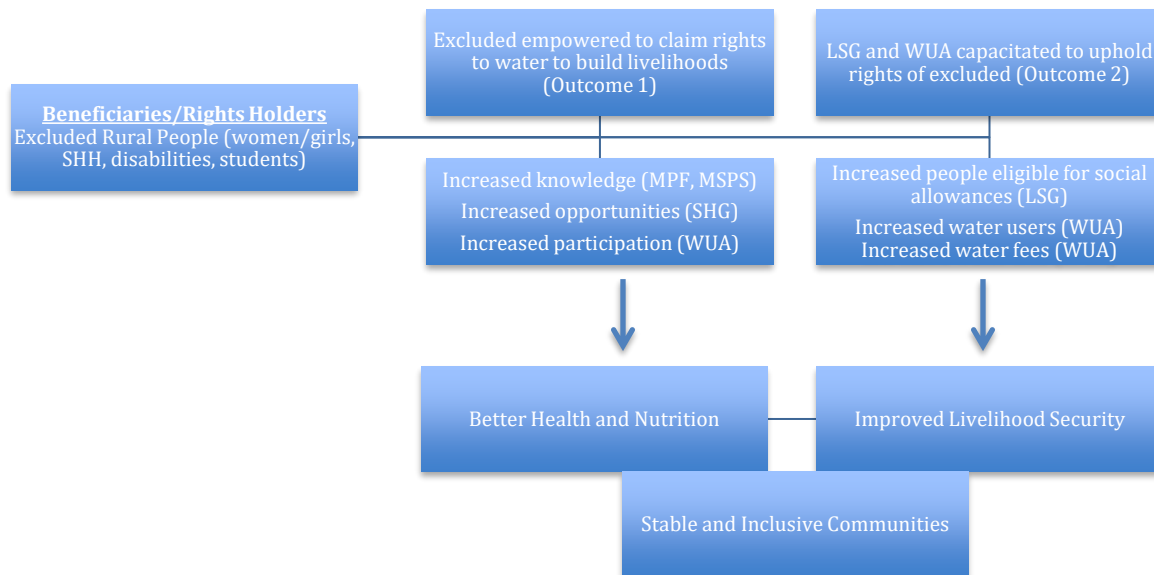
The visual map encompassed the planned project outcomes and outputs. The project works toward empowering the vulnerable and excluded rights holders, and capacitating duty bearers within the WUA and LSG to achieve two outcomes and four outputs (extended to five outputs with the addition of the WASH component in late 2017) within an overall goal of securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources:

> *Outcome 1: People in target communities have started adopting measures for equitable and efficient water use in their households/gardens.*
>
> > *Output 1.1: Secondary school students in selected areas have demonstrated safer and more efficient agricultural practice in their communities.*
> >
> > *Output 1.2: Students have acquired advocacy and communication for change skills to influence attitude change in their communities in favour of more equitable and efficient use of natural resources.*
> >
> > *Output 1.3: (added in late 2017) Secondary school students have equal access to better WASH facilities and knowledge on WASH management.*
>
> *Outcome 2: Capacitated local self-government and Water Users Associations in target areas provide equal access to resources and enhanced services to the population.*

Output 2.1: Local self-governments have started using electronic database management information system 'Berkut' with updated list of people eligible for social allowances.

Output 2.2: WUAs have increased water fee collection as a result of improved user accounting and billing incorporated into 'Berkut'.

4.4 Measuring Gender Change

The evaluation team sought to understand the extent to which project activities influenced identifiable changes in women's empowerment and gender equality at the level of the community, the household and the individual. While the project was designed to empower vulnerable groups, in particular women and girls, the outcomes, outputs and indicators as laid out in the M&E framework did not offer an explicit measure of gender-based change. Evaluators, therefore, looked to other sources of available quantitative data, going beyond the M&E framework to address gaps. The evaluators also utilized qualitative data from participants gathered during interviews and focus group discussions to offer a picture of women's empowerment and changing gender roles and responsibilities as perceived by beneficiaries.

4.5 Data Sources and Collection Methods ⌊SEP⌋

The evaluation used mixed data collection methods to include both qualitative and quantitative data. The primary focus of the field mission was to generate new qualitative data, and to verify and gather relevant quantitative data. The team employed the following research methods:

- **Desk Review** of background documentation including project documents, monitoring data and national plans and commitments;
- **Key Informant Interviews** with a range of stakeholders as elaborated below;
- **Focus Group Discussions** with beneficiary and stakeholder groups including students, vulnerable beneficiaries and WUAs; and
- **Direct Observation** at school sites, LSG, and individual homes of vulnerable women and students.

The evaluation team conducted research with a total of 153 (122 female/31 male) stakeholders and beneficiaries over the five-day field mission in a total of five different locations (Bishkek, Osh and three municipalities). The majority of the participants were from beneficiary groups, and were females. Refer to Annex C for a complete list.

Table 5 – Evaluations Participants by Group and Sex

Participant Groups	Total Number	Number of Women
Implementers (UN Women and RAS JA) and National Partners (government and CSO)	17	10
Donor (Government of Finland)	2	2
Beneficiaries in three municipalities:	134	110
- LSG	9	7
- WUA	17	10
- SHG	28	28
- Principals/Teachers (six schools)	18	16
- Students (six schools)	46	34
- Vulnerable households (direct observation)	16	15
Total	153	122

The team applied different methods of data collection with different target groups as detailed in the chart below.

Table 6 – Data Sources and Methods Employed

Data Source	Method
UN Women staff and personnel Donor representatives ERG members RAS staff Government counterparts CSO counterparts	Individual semi-structured interviews
Head and members of WUAs Vulnerable women in project areas (members of SHG) Participants of LSG component (head of municipality, personnel working on social passportisation and e-governance, social workers) School principal and teachers Secondary school students in target schools who participated in MPF and MSPS courses	Focus groups or small group semi-structured interviews (whatever will be feasible)

4.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the research methods was organized in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex B), which facilitated the analysis and helped to guide interpretation. The evaluators discussed preliminary findings and worked collaboratively to assess the evidence drawn from both primary and secondary data sources.

The evaluation team identified trends and patterns that emerged during the interviews and focus groups, drawing on the extensive notes taken during the field work, including direct quotes from stakeholders and beneficiaries whenever possible. Details on respondent ages, locations or titles were not provided in line with commitments to ensure anonymity of responses.

4.7 Limitations

The biggest constraint faced by the evaluation team was the limited time allocated for primary data collection on a complex project with broad geographical spread. To handle this, interviews and focus groups were limited to one hour each, and research and travel was undertaken in the evenings and late nights. The support of project implementers was critical to the ability of the team to conduct the research. Municipal-level meetings were well orchestrated by the Responsible Party (RAS JA), ensuring that research participants were properly briefed, and attended sessions on time. The Implementing Agency (UN Women) handled all logistical aspects efficiently including transport to sites by air and by vehicle.

The tight timeline for this evaluation did not allow the team to generate new quantitative data to support findings. The design, therefore, focused predominantly on generating qualitative data via interviews, focus groups and observations. The team drew on pre-existing quantitative data, including from the project M&E framework, to triangulate findings wherever possible.

Participation levels were excellent and well balanced during group interviews and focus groups, even in instances where focus groups, unexpectedly, attracted large numbers of participants. Women and men, girls and boys of all ages contributed their thoughts and ideas. This was facilitated well by the national consultant working in the Kyrgyz language as much as possible, and supported with the use of simple participatory methods that required all participants to show via face cards that depicted, happy, sad and neutral faces their responses to key subjects based on their own experiences. Use of the face cards allowed the evaluators to sense the levels of group consensus, and to identify and draw out alternative perspectives.

Language issues were managed with support from interpreters during each of the three site visits. Support in the south was provided by an interpreter who spoke English, Kyrgyz and Russian. Support in the north was provided by an interpreter who spoke Russian and English only, posing difficulties at a location where most participants spoke Kyrgyz. The issue was mitigated to some extent with support

from the national evaluator stepping in as needed to clarify discussions held in Kyrgyz for the international evaluator, who knew neither Russian nor Kyrgyz. The use of simultaneous interpretation during interviews and focus groups was essential given the tight timeframes allowed for field visits, enabling the national and international evaluators to be engaged in discussions with participants in a more fluid manner. Richness in details and nuances would have been missed without such support.

Limited time for the evaluation allowed evaluators to gain insights into the project based on a sample of municipalities and a sample of schools within municipalities. It emerged during the course of the evaluation that three of the six schools visited were considered especially strong performers within the MPF/MSPS components.[5] While evaluators also visited schools with more moderate performances, it was a concern of the evaluators to ensure that the perspectives gleaned from the 'star' schools were balanced with that of other schools. Discussions were held with the Responsible Party to better understand the issue with performance variations between schools, and how this was handled within the project, thereby helping to consider variations in experiences in the analysis. The situation was complicated by the fact that some schools had previously participated in other projects that used the MSPS and MPF components (including the BCP project). Furthermore, some schools and municipalities were involved in other overlapping externally-funded projects, and this led to some confusion as to which initiatives stemmed from which projects.

Evaluators introduced themselves at the start of each session and stressed repeatedly that they were independent contractors, and did not have decision-making power over the future of the project. Despite this, many participants at the village level perceived the evaluators as 'donors' or decision-makers'. There were numerous requests made to continue project operations in key areas. This presented a risk identified by the evaluation team that participants may elevate project achievements in a bid for continued support, although responses generally were felt to be earnest.

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[5] Specifically, Birimkul in Asyl-Bash, Toktogul in Khalmion and Naiman in Naiman were identified by the school administrations as well as the Responsible Party as top achieving schools due in large part to strong engagement and leadership from the Principal as well as the students and teachers. The evaluators also spoke to representatives from Beishenaly in Asyl-Bash, and Jooshuk and Primov in Khalmion, which were identified as more moderate performers.

5 - Findings

This section presents evaluation findings around the questions elaborated in the TOR related to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project. The findings integrate key results related to gender equality and human rights throughout.

5.1 Relevance

1.   *The project design was highly relevant to the priority needs of community beneficiaries. The focus on the vulnerable or marginalized segments of society was well targeted to the needs of 'those furthest behind', and remained central to all aspects of the project.*

The UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan developed the project in consultation with the donor and other stakeholders, and in line with the mandates of the respective organizations (UN Women and the Government of Finland as elaborated in the FinWaterWEI II Programme). The design drew on a sound analysis of the local context, and was grounded on previous experiences the CO had implementing community development initiatives with a gender and human rights based focus. The project design also leveraged off of previous positive experiences working with youth *vis a vis* the MSPS and MPF models.

The project design and results were deemed highly relevant to the communities within which the project was implemented. Indeed, a positive perception of project relevance among key decision-makers at the local level was an important prerequisite for communities to be considered in the selection process.

Respondents from the full range of stakeholders at the local level stated repeatedly and consistently that water was one of the biggest issues their communities faced, and that the project was well targeted to address the issue, not only in terms of access, but in terms of inclusiveness.

> *The water issue is the most critical issue in our area. We were not aware about management of the water system before. The project was very important and necessary. We had many disputes and conflicts before related to water, but now relations are very peaceful.* Woman in SHG, Asyl-Bash

Students, teachers and heads of schools that participated in the MSPS and MPF components also expressed high degrees of satisfaction in regard to the relevance of the courses to the needs of the students and communities. Numerous examples were offered of parents expressing 'distrust' at the beginning of the project, and not fully supporting the involvement of their son/daughter. This reticence eroded swiftly as parents recognized the relevance of project benefits for their children and their families as a whole. An added benefit was that the project strengthened the relationships between parents and schools by offering new channels of communication. *Initially there was a mistrust to activities we (teachers) were*

planning to handle. After the first year, the parents saw the results and they begin to trust us. The parents' relationship with the school is now stronger. (Teacher, Naiman)

The focus on the vulnerable or marginalized segments of society was appropriately targeted, and remained central to all aspects of the project. The integrated focus on inclusivity of vulnerable groups across components was particularly noteworthy given the broad spread of multiple project components. Vulnerable households were accurately identified and issued mandatory social passports using the AIMAK e-governance system introduced by the project. They were then integrated into the WUA as members who required special consideration, particularly in the case of female-headed households with young children. Vulnerable women were given new skills and information within the SHGs, and children from marginalized households were also given special support through the youth component of the project. Through the different components, the project successfully elevated the visibility of the needs of 'those furthest behind', and found means to address their issues involving them and their broader communities in finding solutions.

2.   *The project was consistent with and contributed to key national development strategies, including the National Sustainable Development Strategy, National Education Development Strategy, National Strategy on the Achievement of Gender Equality, Priority Directions for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Kyrgyz Republic as well as laws and codes governing water usage in the country.*

The project contributes to the implementation of key national development strategies and their corresponding action plans. Specifically, the project supports the **National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2018-2040** which puts the individual at the center of development and promotes functional obligations of the state as a duty bearer and provider of key services including education and basic infrastructure. The project focus on capacity building of LSGs to provide a citizen-centered and quality-first approach to their services via access to the AIMAK e-governance system supports the government development strategy.

The project MSPS and MPF components support the **National Education Development Strategy 2012-2020** that includes the need to raise young citizens who: have strong communication skills; can act independently, express their opinions, use creative and innovative approaches; share values of human rights, gender equality; respect cultural, ethnic and political diversity; and have knowledge and skills that ensure their life and professional success. The **NSDS** also highlights the need to stimulate youth activism and enable young people to solve their problems themselves, consistent with project focus.

The project contributes to the **Strategy on Gender Equality (2012-2020) and its ensuing National Action Plan (NAP)** as well as the **NAP for UN SCR1325** that provides the government vision on coherent and coordinated action of the state as

duty bearer towards protecting the rights of women in cases of conflict and crisis. The project has contributed to Priority One of the National Strategy on Gender Equality, focusing on broader economic opportunities for women. Under this priority the government strategy identifies the need to change patriarchal views on the role of a women in society and the economy, and raise the social status of women by promoting their economic independence.

The project work to institute the AIMAK database system was directly relevant to the strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic **"Tazakoom",** launched in June 2017, on digital transformation at all levels aimed at providing greater transparency of governance systems. Though stalled at the time of the evaluation, the "**Tazakoom**" vision remains highly relevant, and will require information and technology programs at local and national levels to be integrated under a single e-governance system. The project development of the AIMAK database led to increased efficiency and transparency of the operations of participating LSGs with a user-friendly model for e-governance and social passportisation, which has been recognized as a viable model for moving forward at the national level.[6]

The project contributes to the implementation of key national laws on water governance such as the **Law of the Kyrgyz Republic On Water** dated September 26, 1995, No. 21-I and the **Water Code of the Kyrgyz Republic** dated January 12, 2005 No. 8, which together regulates water relations in the sphere of use, protection and development of water resources for guaranteed, sufficient and safe water supply to the population of the Kyrgyz Republic, environmental protection and ensuring rational development of the country's water fund.

The project contributes to the implementation of key national development strategies and their corresponding action plans in the field of rational water usage in agriculture. Specifically, the project supports the **Priority Directions for Adaptation to Climate Change In the Kyrgyz Republic til 2017** approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated October 2, 2013 No. 549 which puts at the center an improvement of water management system and changes in water usage methods.

The project contributes to the implementation of **the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Water Users Associations (WUA)** dated March 30, 2013 N 46. The project increased capacity of six WUAs and one Water Users Committee to conduct their duties in accordance with this Law as a non-profit organization operating in the public interest working within a gender equality and human rights focus. The main objectives of the WUA as per the Law are, *inter alia*,: 1) operation and maintenance of the irrigation system and distribution of water between WUA members on the basis of annual agreements; 2) rehabilitation and improvement of irrigation systems

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[6] To this end, discussions have already taken place with key stakeholders including the National Statistics Committee, and further discussions were planned and on-going at the time of the evaluation.

and construction works; 3) receipt of irrigation water from a water supplier on the basis of a contract for the supply of water or the proper collection of water; 4) regulation of water use and distribution within the WUA service area.

3. *The project worked with both duty bearers and rights holders in all component areas to operationalize gender and human rights principles in a manner that was relevant and meaningful to the lives of participants.*

The project was tailored to the historical and social context of the country, focusing on sites with limited natural resources and employment opportunities, and high rates of out-migration, often leaving behind the more vulnerable members of the communities. The project was therefore designed to enable the vulnerable and those with less access to resources and opportunities to claim their rights and optimize available opportunities. It worked with both duty bearers and rights holders within a framework that prioritized the needs of the most vulnerable and sought to build gender equality by empowering women and girls in particular.

The project was able to work with different community groups in a manner that made the theory of gender equality relevant and meaningful to the lives of the participants. The Gender Expert on the RAS JA team provided valuable support to these endeavours by designing and delivering training components that operationalized the theory with examples that were specific to the subjects at hand, working with schools, WUA, LSGs and SHGs. The expert also worked strategically from within RAS JA to improve the capacities of staff so that gender and human rights expertise was not held by a single expert, but more fully integrated into the daily work of those who spent the most time in the communities.[7]

The project was highly successful in integrating the gender and human rights based focus across each component. The project was furthermore able to strengthen the impact of activities within a single component by making linkages between institutions so that, for example, students worked with WUAs on advocacy campaigns that included gender equality messaging on water users rights, and SHGs members became active members at WUA meetings. The recurrence of activities that focus on women and vulnerable community members within the sustainability plans designed by participants from all components across the seven communities is strong testimony to the strength of the messaging and the impact on behavioural change.

4. *The project served as a catalyst for change by working across individual, family and institutional levels to address root causes of inequalities in participation and access to water.*

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[7] The work of the Gender Expert to sensitize RAS JA staff members built upon previous efforts by UN Women under the BCP project to increase the RAS team's awareness of gender equality issues (BCP Final Evaluation 2016).

The project has served as a catalyst for change by working across different levels of interaction to challenge traditional patterns of gender and other inequalities in access and participation.   Inequalities are commonly displayed and replicated within communities at the individual level, within the family, and, more formally, within institutions. By changing people's access to knowledge, information and skills, the project influenced positive change in multiple spheres:

Individual – empowerment of women, girls and boys to advocate for fair water distribution and practice sustainable water use with evidence that practices spread spontaneously through local networks (SHG, MSPS, MPF);

Family – changes in women's understanding of rights and sense of worth (SHG); increased respect for children's rights and expanded roles/status for girls and boys around water and agricultural livelihoods with likelihood that such changes will impact positively on future generations (MPF, MSPS);

Institutional – changes in women's participation in leadership and decision-making has broached the accepted critical mass threshold of 30 percent[8] within the WUAs by which a group is believed to be able to achieve change within an organization and be accepted as a part of normal operations, rather than as tokens.

5. *Project interventions were well aligned with international agreements and conventions including the Sustainable Development Goals, Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and UN SCR1325.*

The "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project has worked in line with and in support of **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and targets as follows:

SDG 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources and sanitation for all
SDG 10 Reduce inequalities within and among countries
SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
SDG 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The project has also contributed to the implementation of the vision set forth in the **Beijing Platform for Action**: "Women's empowerment and their full participation

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[8] Women comprise 26.4 percent of water governance bodies at project close, up from only 3.3 percent at the start of the project.

on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (para 13); and "Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process (para 34)".

The project focus on elevating women's participation in WUA management and empowering a new generation of young women to become involved in community activities contributed directly to Article 5 of **CEDAW** that calls for modification of social and cultural patterns based on stereotyped roles for men and women. The same components contributed indirectly to the implementation of **UNSCR 1325** National Action Plan 2016-2017, Task 1.2: Ensure women involvement in decision-making and post-conflict peacebuilding on the local level – by creating an environment in which women's participation in local level processes became more accepted and normal.

6. *UN Women is uniquely positioned within the country to promote women's empowerment and gender equality while making important linkages between policy and grassroots level work in line with global good practice and the emphasis of FinWaterWEI II.*

UN Women's growing work on natural resource management, climate change and adaptation falls under their global Women, Peace and Security framework, which positions women as central to community level solutions.

The focus of FinWater WEI II included an emphasis on how high-level policy work could combine with project activities to produce concrete deliverables at the lower levels. UN Women has a mandate and a proven track record of working effectively at both levels, as policy experts as well as field level technicians. The Government of Finland undertook an extensive vetting process before selecting partners for the FinWaterWEI II Programme, including the assessment of the capacity of an institution to contribute to the three cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy: gender equality, reduction of inequality and climate sustainability.

UN Women was able to draw on their experiences working successfully with local youth under the MPF and MSPS models, thereby refining their tools and approaches within the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project to make linkages between sustainable natural resource management, agricultural productivity, women's empowerment, gender equality and human rights. The 'My Prosperous Farm' curriculum was updated by UN Women in 2013 to put gender equality advocacy at its heart, creating new avenues to effect gender equality. UN Women's MSPS model has been found to be a low-cost, self-replicating model that promotes peace and stability while simultaneously leading to changing power structures in favor of children in general and girls in particular (BCP Final Evaluation 2016:28).

UN Women is seen by stakeholders as having a distinct role and capacity to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in the context of delivering wider project results. Key areas of experience and expertise that illustrate UN Women's comparative advantage relative to this project include:

- Extensive experience working on women's economic empowerment initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic, with a strong focus on mobilising rural women into Self Help Groups;
- A strong track-record of engaging youth and secondary schools students at community level through the courses *My Safe and Peaceful School* and *My Prosperous Farm;*
- Expertise working with local self-government on integrating gender issues into local planning and budgeting processes;
- Experience overseeing projects dealing with water and gender issues; and
- Ability and positioning to ensure key results can be replicated and/or up-scaled and fed into discussions of national partners at policy levels.

7.   *The project is strategically aligned with the key UN planning frameworks, making contributions to the four priorities of the UNDAF as well as the UN Women Country Office Strategic Note.*

The Country Office Strategic Note is the main planning tool for UN Women's work in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Strategic Note is grounded in the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The Strategic Note 2018-2022 outlines a holistic programme that prioritizes two thematic (impact) areas and two outcomes:

Impact 1: All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
Outcome 1: Women and men, especially youth, value social norms supporting gender equality and women's empowerment at individual and community levels
Impact 2: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
Outcome 2: Key national institutions are implementing international obligations and national commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in policy and budgeting processes, and are accountable for results

"Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" has contributed directly to both impact and outcomes. The work with women and men, and especially with students under the MPF and MSPS courses, targeted changes in values and norms at both the individual and community level. The work with LSGs and WUAs offered viable models for replication and up scaling to the national level, facilitated by the project linkages to national stakeholders including the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Development and the State Agency for Local Self Governance and interethnic Relations of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2022 is the framework for cooperation between the Government and the UNCT that contributes to the country's strategic priorities for development. The framework identifies four priorities and corresponding outcomes that guide the

work of all of the agencies that comprise the UN system in KR. A breakdown of the project components reveals that project outcomes contribute to all four priorities of the UNDAF as follows:

Table 7 – Project Linkages to Kyrgyz Republic UNDAF (2018-2022)

UNDAF Priority	UNDAF Outcomes	Project Focus
I. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industrial, rural and agricultural development, food security and nutrition	**1.** By 2022, inclusive and sustainable industrial, agricultural and rural development contribute to economic growth, decent work, improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition, especially among women and vulnerable groups	Focus on sustainable agricultural production, livelihoods, food security and nutrition in seven municipalities, with a special focus on women and vulnerable groups
II. Good Governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality	**2.** By 2022, institutions at all levels are more accountable and inclusive ensuring justice, human rights, gender equality and sustainable peace for all	Focus on local government and institutional (including WUA) accountability for service delivery with a focus on vulnerable families (gender equality and human rights based approach)
III. Environment, climate change, and disaster risk management	**3.** By 2022, communities are more resilient to climate and disaster risks and are engaged in sustainable and inclusive natural resource management and risk-informed development	Focus on sustainable land and water management at the level of the household and the community.
IV. Social Protection, Health and Education	**4.** By 2022, social protection, health and education systems are more effective and inclusive, and provide quality services	Focus on improving the quality and relevance of social protection and education systems (schools and social passportisation) in target municipalities

By promoting the participation of the most vulnerable and previously excluded groups in community governance of water resources, fostering understanding of gender equality and promoting equal access to community natural resources and by strengthening the skills and knowledge of young women and men on efficient use of scarce resources, the project is fully aligned with the human rights based approach

Furthermore, the project contributes to each of the priority areas of the Finnish development policy programme (2016): 1) strengthening the rights and status of women and girls have strengthened; 2) developing countries' economies to generate jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being; 3) societies have become more democratic and better-functioning; and 4) food security and access to water and energy have improved, and natural resources are used sustainably.

5.2 Effectiveness �*SEP�*

8.   *The project has achieved or exceeded most of the expected results at outcome and output level, although the results framework failed to capture some of the projects most significant successes, particularly in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment.*

The project has achieved the expected results on the basis of the results framework, meeting or exceeding most of the eight indicators as detailed in the table below. The evaluation identified several issues relating to the results framework that were largely reflective of problems with indicator design and data availability, rather than actual project results. For example:

> **Outcome Indicator 2b** targets a 10% increase in the number of newly identified water users by WUAs. The intent was designed as a measure of expanded coverage of previously excluded groups, such as female-headed households and disabled people. However, data comparisons between end of year 2016 and 2017 showed an overall decrease in water users of 1366. Reasons for observed decrease include inaccuracies in baseline water data that did not reflect existing households in project areas and included those that had moved or migrated. Data from end of 2017 showed that users included 2066 women and 1387 disabled persons. However, comparison data was not available for 2016 because the new database systems had not yet been introduced. While it is likely based on qualitative data that the project has successfully included more vulnerable groups as water users, the lack of baseline data makes this impossible to verify quantitatively.

> **Output Indicator 2.1** targets a 15% increase of newly identified people eligible for social allowances. Baseline data could not be established at start up phase based on municipal records. The project was able to use the new database systems to compare data from the seven municipalities Jan 2017 to Oct 2017, finding an increase in the number of newly identified children (40% increase) as well as people with disabilities (19% increase) eligible for social allowance, which was in line with the intent of the indicator. However, national stakeholders raised another issue regarding the framing of the indicator in that it runs contrary to the national policy to reduce the number of receivers of social allowance with the creation of more stable livelihoods. This will take time to realize, however, and could not be measured within the timeframe of the project.

Issues with M&E are further elaborated in the table below and under finding number 12.

Table 8 – "Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water" Results Framework

Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators	Sources and Means of Verification	Comments and Findings
Outcome 1. People in target communities have started adopting measures for equitable and efficient water use in their households/gardens	Indicator 1 Percentage of people surveyed who have adopted at least one of the measures to use water effectively recommended through students' advocacy actions • Target [at project operational closure]: 70% of people surveyed in target communities Baseline:	Indicator 1. Survey of a sample group in each target community at project end. 130 HH at baseline Sep/Oct 2016. End survey was 170 HH Jan 2018	The project has not collected data that clearly feeds into the indicator <u>as written</u>. The data collected, however, shows that there has been an increase in knowledge and adoption of the five methods of water use recommended through student's advocacy actions as follows: drip irrigation 1% to 2.8% rain water 1% to 3.8% mulching 0% to 16% short furrow irrigation 14% to 68.8% staged furrow irrigation 22% to 66.6% (End line survey from Final Analyses Report 2018)
Output 1.1. Secondary school students in selected areas have demonstrated more efficient water use practice in their communities	Indicator 1.1a Number of students enrolled in MPF course who have improved knowledge and skills on sustainable agricultural practices • Target [at project operational closure]: 1000	Indicator 1.1a. Regular tests administered by teachers Indicator 1.1b. Regular monitoring visit reports of extension specialist to student plots and school sites, student diaries	1.1a In total 1,639 students, out of which 794 girls and 524 boys are enrolled in the MPF course. By the end of the year 1,420 students (712 girls and 708 boys) have applied the knowledge gained. (Mar 2018 PR) 1.1b 1,132 (524 girls and 608 boys)

			students and 45 teachers prepared composts. Out of them, 463 are new students who started MPF course from September 2017 and will complete in May 2018. (Mar 2018 PR)
	Indicator 1.1b Number of students who have used knowledge on the efficient agricultural production and water use in their kitchen garden plots or school demonstration sites • Target [at project operational closure]: 500 • Baseline [as of end 2014]: 0	Indicator 1.1c. Regular monitoring visit reports of extension specialist to student plots and school sites, student diaries	
			1.1c 59,5% higher yields students received form their kitchen gardens compared to average yields in their communities (Mar 2018 PR)
	Indicator 1.1c Percentage change in yields received by students compared to average yields in their communities • Target [at project operational closure]: 20 percent above average community yields • Baseline [as of end 2014]: 0		
Output 1.2. Students have acquired advocacy and communication for change skills to influence attitude	Indicator 1.2 Number of people reached by advocacy actions for equal and efficient use of land and	Indicator 1.2. Students' action plans and reports	1.2 28,042 people were reached through advocacy campaigns on effective use of land and water resources, gender equality and equal

Earlier text (top of first column):

• Baseline [as of end 2014]: 0

change in their communities in favour of more equitable and efficient use of natural resources	water resources implemented by school students in their communities • Target [at project operational closure]: 30,000 persons in target communities • Baseline: 0		rights to water through "door to door" initiatives by MPF and MSPS students. An additional 17,285 people were reached on a WASH campaign linked to the new school facilities.
Output 1.3: The secondary school students in 13 schools have equal access to better WASH facilities and knowledge on WASH management.	Indicator 1.3a: Number of WASH facilities are renovated in schools and their quality of renovation Target: 13 well-renovated and well-functional WASH facilities mainstreamed in 13 selected schools Baseline: 0	Indicator 1.3 WASH assessment report	1.3 In 13 schools new WASH facilities have been installed and are operational at the entrance of the schools. Additional indicators for this program were developed and monitored internally, and have been incorporated in donor reporting.
Outcome 2. Capacitated local self-government and Water Users Associations in target areas provide equal access to resources and enhanced services to the population	Indicator 2a Percentage of people satisfied with the services of LSG in relation to ensuring equal access to water resources • Target [at project operational closure]: 50% over baseline	Indicator 2a. Survey of sample of visitors to LSG office to be carried out at the start and end of the project Indicator 2b. User records of WUAs	2.a Baseline - 35.6 % of respondents to survey of 130 people in all 7 communities (Sep/Oct 2016). Respondents were 51% male and 49% female including 19 from vulnerable families (15%). Respondents came from high, middle and low zone of water distribution. End line - 64.2 % were fully satisfied based on 170 respondents. Exceeds indicator target at 80% higher than baseline.

- Baseline: will be
  confirmed by survey in
  2015

Indicator 2b
Percentage increase in the
number of newly identified
water users by WUAs
(covering potentially
excluded groups, such as
female headed households,
disabled people, etc.)
- Target [at project
  operational closure]: 10%
  over baseline
- Baseline: to be
  established from the
  existing user records of
  selected WUAs

Note that the baseline and closing
survey were included as part of a
broader assessments administered by
RAS JA. While participants were
selected to be representative of based
on sex, vulnerability and irrigation
zone, respondents were not random
and included community leaders and
decision-makers.

2.b Start of project in 2016 there were
18,785 water users. At end of 2017
there were 17,419 including 2066
women and 1387 disabled persons.
Data is not available for comparison
with 2016. Total decrease in water
users is 1366. Reasons for decrease
include inaccuracies in baseline water
data that did not reflect existing
households in project areas and
included those that had moved or
migrated.

It is likely based on qualitative data
that many of the women and those
with disabilities are new water users,
but the lack of baseline data that
identifies this information makes this
impossible to verify.

Output 2.1. Local self-governments have started using electronic database management information system 'Berkut' with updated list of people eligible for social allowances	Indicator 2.1 Percentage increase of newly identified people eligible for social allowances • Target [at project operational closure]: 15 percent of the baseline • Baseline: to be established from official municipal records during start-up phase	Indicator 2.1. Review of the official list of recipients of social allowances	2.1 40 % increase in the number of newly identified children eligible for social allowance from 5932 children January 2017 up to 8336 children in October 2017 (total 2404 newly identified children). 19.3 % increase in the number of newly identified people eligible for social allowance based on disabilities from 456 disabled persons on January 2017 up to 544 persons in October, 2017 (88 newly identified disabled persons).
Output 2.2. WUAs have increased water fee collection as a result of improved user accounting and billing incorporated into 'Berkut'	Indicator 2.2 Percentage increase in water fee collection in WUAs • Target [at project operational closure]: 10 percent over baseline • Baseline : to be established during start-up phase	Indicator 2.2. Review of WUA accounting records	Total amount of water fees collected in 2015 was 7,535,110 som for six WUAs; in 2016 was 11,177,978 som for six WUAs. Total amount collected in 2017 was 10,677,394 som, Total increase from 2015 to 2017 was 41.7 percent. However, there was a total decrease of 4.5 percent between 2016 and 2017. Data suggests that WUA ability to collect fees according to plans has increased over the life of the project as follows: 2015 – 71% of planned fees collected

2016 – 87.6 % of planned fees collected
2017 – 86.2 % of planned fees collected

Reasons for overall fee reductions between 2016-17 are not well understood, and may be linked to updated user lists which only charge those families that use water Furthermore, fee collection is based on the actual water volume WUAs get from the District level water resources management unit. 2016 turned out to be dryer than 2017, which may have resulted in a higher demand for water in 2016 than in 2017.

9.

The project was able to succeed due to a strong design that focused on fair distribution and effective use of limited water resources. Success was also tied to a careful site selection process that focused on community needs as well as 'readiness'.   The project was able to achieve intended results due to a strategy of strengthening institutions while building greater connectivity between institutions.   A hands-on, graduated approach to community development was also key to building beneficiary confidence and empowerment.

This section is broken down by the 'big picture' and 'small picture' overview.

5.2.1 Big Picture Overview

There are numerous factors that contributed to the achievement of project results. The project design marked a **strategic shift in thinking** away from a focus on scarcity of water to address the fair distribution and effective use of limited water resources from an exclusion point of view. This approach highlighted the importance of distribution and efficient water use, rather than looking at infrastructure as an entry point. It also shifted the focus away from land plots (traditionally the domain of men) toward kitchen or backyard gardens (the domain of women).

The project **selection process** of working with communities that were ready and willing to make changes in how they functioned was also a foundational element to project achievements. In this manner, communities themselves made informed choices to opt in or out of the project approach and targets. The screening process was extensive and methodical, detailing criteria against which final decisions were made. The decision-making process engaged the national stakeholder representatives of the CC.

The project functioned effectively within all relevant spheres (or components) to bring about change in line with behavioural change theory.

Diagram 9 - Model of Community Change (Multi-Component Intervention)[9]

Drawing on the above model, "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" worked to affect changes within multiple components, thereby having greater impact on community change as follows:

> **Individual** - bringing new knowledge and ideas linked to practical skills development
> **Interpersonal** – working through and strengthening social networks, and intra-family dynamics
> **Organizational** – creating and strengthening organizational structures within the community
> **Community** – facilitating and institutionalizing formal and informal relationships between institutions
> **Public Policy** – informed by relevant legal frameworks, and informing higher-level policy.

Worthy of note is the impact the project had on how institutions relate to each other within the community. The project brought about, not only stronger institutions, but **greater connectivity between institutions** as illustrated by the diagram below. This is a critical reason for project successes across component areas, and bodes well for future sustainability as greater connections serve as a natural check and balance on each institution.

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[9] Ohio State University. "Community Wide Multi-Component Intervention".
   https://u.osu.edu/pubhhbp6510tanningbeds/community-wide-intervention/

Diagram 10 – Venn Diagram of Community Institutions

Interconnectivity of Institutions

Before   After

SHG   WUA

Schools   LSG   WUA

Schools

LSG

Another reason for observed successes was the **hands-on approach to community development** undertaken by RAS JA and UN Women. Community development processes can be slow and uneven. Project staff were deemed to have spent sufficient time in the communities, working side by side with beneficiaries as trainers and teachers, and also as facilitators and colleagues who encouraged beneficiaries to experiment with new types of irrigation, new seeds and agricultural methods, new forms of processing and marketing. Beneficiaries from SHG, LSG, WUA and schools alike all echoed that project staff treated them with respect and dignity.

The **step-by-step approach to learning** was also an important factor in project success. Project staff encouraged beneficiaries to learn, and then do, and then assess, and then do again. This built people's skills and allowed them to see for themselves what worked best on their land. Even more importantly, the step-by-step approach built people's **confidence** and belief in themselves, and this is one of the most critical parts of an **empowerment** process. The evaluators observed this pattern again and again – speaking with students at schools, in the SHGs, within the WUAs and also the home visits.

> Before the project, we had no ability even to define our needs. If we visited other greenhouses or businesses, for us it was like a dream, but now the dream has become reality and we have worked step by step. Because of the project we understood we could implement all our dreams by ourselves. **Woman in SHG, Naiman**

5.2.2 Small Picture Overview by Component

This section looks more deeply at evaluation findings by component area.

MSPS and MPF

The *My Safe and Peaceful School* operational model worked directly with students to elect peer educators and form peer-led study groups with support by UN Women. Peer educators worked with their groups over the school year to cover course material focused on a range of topics including governance, gender and human rights. Peer groups drafted and executed action plans based on their learning, thereby putting knowledge into practice. Action plans were often conducted jointly with Water Users' Associations and local authorities to promote, *inter alia*, gender equality, equal access to water resources, and enhanced water efficiency in schools and communities.

The *My Prosperous Farm* curriculum was designed to enable students to use scarce land and water resources to build successful livelihoods, involving both women and men (girls and boys) in productive agriculture as an alternative to poverty-induced migration, while avoiding conflict over land and water use. Courses included information about land and water rights, small business operations, agriculture and marketing, and how to ensure equal access of women to natural resources. MPF supported students to sustainably develop their own small plots of land (kitchen gardens). Student performance was linked to access to different levels of benefits in the form of tools and seeds, as well as larger 'rewards' such as greenhouses and irrigations systems on the basis of competitive proposals. The MPF model sought to ensure that students and their families were sensitized to the role of local self-government and WUA in regulating access to scarce natural resources for the benefit of the entire community thereby reducing conflict over scarce resources that may result from non-transparent and/or preferential decision-making.

A WASH component was added to the project in response to requests from teachers and school administrators implementing the MPF course to afford students the opportunity to practice WASH principles at schools. This was not possible at most of the project schools due to limited or non-functioning facilities. The proposal to renovate and rehabilitate WASH facilities was agreed by the CC in September 2017, and additional funds were requested and supported by the donor. The small-scale additions of the WASH facilities proved to be a positive experience, and allowed students to conduct practice-based advocacy campaigns for improved sanitation and hygiene in the schools.

Reasons for results

Students, parents, teachers and administrators as well as wider members of the community reported very positive results from the MSPS and MPF courses. Students highlighted the importance of the new knowledge and skills learned, but also focused on communication and advocacy skills, and their growing confidence in themselves. Course successes were influenced positively by the structure and content of the courses, which was relevant to the lives of students while, at the same time, <u>new</u> in terms of content and <u>innovative</u> in terms of delivery methods. Course demands in terms of time and commitment were generally deemed reasonable. A number of students noted that they had too much leisure time before, and that they were now more productive and able to reap the benefits of their efforts.[10]

Through the courses, students proved themselves to be highly effective advocates for community change. They were able to transfer the knowledge they gained to their siblings, parents, grandparents, neighbors, teachers and other community members. They did so in organized ways via participation in community meetings and advocacy campaigns, but also in more informal ways through exchanges in the home, showing neighbors and working with extended family members in their garden plots and sharing the rewards of their produce sales with others[11].

Changes Within Families

Last year I visited my grandparents and said I would make a compost but they refused and did not support. This year my grandmother participated in the SHG and learned from RAS and that changed her attitude. She supported my compost and agriculture. **Female Student**

Before my initiative with growing cucumbers, my parents would try to stop me but now that I have had this success, my parents are supporting me. Parents are first afraid we can't handle it, but when they see success, they see we can handle it on our own. **Male Student**

When you plant something and get the income on your own, they (parents) see that you can handle responsibility in your life. Parents began to value us more, and see that we can discuss together some issues before making decision. Parents began to ask our opinions now. **Female Student**

MSPS and MPF students included in FGDs did not report significant problems, but evaluators kept in mind that students selected were those that had been highly successful under the programs so do not necessarily represent the experiences of those who were less successful. Some students noted initial reluctance on the part

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[10] Findings were consistent with those of the BCP Final Evaluation (2016) for the MPF and MSPS courses.

[11] While some students used the cash from their marketing activities for personal items such as clothes or cell phones, others contributed to family finances, shared their harvests with friends and neighbors, and made in-kind donations to their schools.

of their parents, especially for females, but they changed their mind over time and with support from teachers to help explain processes.

The engagement of students in the MPF and MSPS courses appeared to have elevated the status of youth within the community, representing a shift in power dynamics that included newfound respect for the voice of youth. This shift is especially significant in the case of girls, who comprised the majority of the course participants, and who have traditionally had even less visibility and 'voice' than boys. *With the MPF, teachers and parents began to believe in the girls that they can handle the gardening and agriculture - they began believing in their daughters. (RAS JA staff)*

LSG - AIMAK and E-governance

The project made significant changes to the functioning of the LSG with the introduction of an electronic database and changes to community operations. LSGs were involved in all project components to some degree due to their management role in the community. Each LSG developed and implemented annual work plans alongside WUAs and social workers. Over the course of the project, LSGs became increasingly involved in supporting the work of other institutions involved in the project, especially the WUA, SHGs and schools.[12]

The project worked with each LSG to undertake a needs assessment of social passportisation to inform the design of a system to verify eligibility for state social allowances. The AIMAK database and information system was designed in close collaboration with LSGs as well as district and national-level stakeholders to enable social workers to generate reports and monitor the status of vulnerable community members. Social workers were trained on social passportisation in line with new standards from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development while IT personnel in LSGs were trained on how to use the newly installed digital information systems and maps to generate reports and issue computerized certificates based on updated information.

Reasons for results

The AIMAK system was deemed by users within the LSG to be both effective and efficient, allowing them to perform their duties around issuing social passports and certificates with ease. This component of the project succeeded, in large part, due to perseverance and pragmatic problem-solving approach of project staff. The e-governance expert at RAS JA and other staff were able to work effectively with the appropriate stakeholders to create a system that has been deemed user-friendly and extremely efficient by users. Those who have been trained on the system feel confident they can continue to use it without direct project support.

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[12] LSG involvement varied, but evidence of strengthened supportive relationships include one LSG providing co-funding to a school to establish a greenhouse, LSGs providing SHGs with land for agricultural ventures and LSGs inviting students to make presentations at community meetings.

Under the guidance of the expert on e-governance, the project was able to make significant progress dealing with a multitude of unexpected complications that emerged around the e-governance component. The project entered into this arena from the perspective of identifying vulnerable groups, and unwittingly walked into a web of obstacles that included a lack of common standards on certifications, multiple de-linked registry databases in the country as well as issues with mismatched translations from Russian to Kyrgyz. While addressing these issues

> *The 'Aimak' is easy and simple to work with. Fast. We can enter new facts if there are changes in the family. It was complicated to do this before. Much more straightforward now - efficient and convenient. We hope to continue working with 'Aimak'. We would like if the whole government uses this system.*
> **Responsible Secretary, LSG**

delayed the start of some project activities, they were dealt with methodically and in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders to ultimately produce viable models.

The e-governance component of the project has proven to be a rich source of operational materials that are of strong interest at the higher levels of government in line with modernization plans. At the close of the project, plans were underway to implement the mapping procedures designed under the project in Uch-Korgon municipality (approximately 12,000 people) as a test case for broader implementation. If successful, implementation will be expanded to all municipalities of the district. A delegation representing key government bodies from Bishkek visited Uch-Korgon in March 2018 and made plans to establish an inter-ministerial commission to provide inputs and advise on broader dissemination. Further meetings are planned to feed into on-going national processes toward functioning national e-governance systems, but they will need to rely on the commitment of key experts from the implementing agencies and national stakeholders to continue forward with this work after project close.

Self-Help Groups
A total of 14 Self-Help Groups that included 170 women were established in the 4th quarter of 2017 in the target communities. Drawing on the social passport data, at least six members of each group were classified as vulnerable. Group leaders attended capacity building training in November 2017 that included discussions with successful SHGs in Jalalabad, business strategies, and marketing and sales principles for income generating initiatives. SHG members also learned about WUA operations, water user's rights and duties, women's role in water management and how to effectively use water resources in their communities. Under the guidance of the gender expert and community development specialists from RAS JA, groups developed and began implementing action plans. Groups established funds and began a total of 12 agriculture business initiatives such as green houses and fruit production.

The results of the business initiatives were not yet realized at the time of the evaluation because most were still in start-up phases. However, the pride and

> *We are more active in life engagement; more interested in life. Before we were not aware of WUA and what is happening in the community – it was not interesting – now we are engaged in this and also dispute resolution.....We are so thankful and happy after such meetings because before we were just sitting at home and now we are active in the community.* **Women's SHG, Asyl-Bash**

enthusiasm of the women was fully evident. It was promising to see that different groups developed different plans in line with their own ideas and resources including available land. Apart from the small business initiatives, the women shared with the evaluation team their feelings about being involved in the group. Through the groups, many had found a sense of purpose and self-worth that was lacking in their lives. They described themselves as being always in the home before the project, but now they went to meetings and this was a source of pride for them and earned them respect in their families, impacting positively on family gender dynamics. *Men started to respect us and listen to us because now we have information and some income. The land plot was only my responsibility before, but now the whole family is involved. Husbands are helping and supporting more.* Woman from SHG, Naiman

Reasons for results

While it is too soon to fully realize the results of the SHG, these groups showed strong potential to empower their members to become more productive members of their households and their communities. The project has worked strategically during the establishment of the groups to learn from the lessons of similar efforts in the country of best practices for group sustainability. Groups established charters and rules of engagement during the start-up phase. Groups included vulnerable women as well as women who could serve as effective leaders. Members were clustered in neighbourhoods so that they could more easily interact and provide support to one another. Membership in the group was not seen as a 'stigma', but a privilege, raising the status of those who were engaged as they attended meetings and trainings and became more visible in their communities.

The project established strong linkages between the newly established SHGs and other community organizations to facilitate inclusive women's participation at local levels of decision making with a focus on governance and irrigation water management. SHG members connected with MPF students for technical support, and participated in needs assessment exercises by WUAs to voice their challenges in accessing irrigation water. With more time, these relationships should expand and strengthen.

The total of 28 SHG group members who contributed to focus group discussions for the evaluation included younger women with small children, middle-aged women and grandmothers. There were women who had leadership skills and there were women who did not. Some women dressed in a modern style, but most dressed in more traditional Kyrgyz style. There were women who owned large plots of land and lived in solid homes, and there were women who had small house plots with

run-down homes. One theme that emerged during the course of these discussions in each municipality, and it was not expected, was that the women felt that one of the most important benefits they gained from the SHGs was 'friendship'. Through the group, they learned about each other and began supporting each other formally and informally. They moved from being somewhat isolated to feeling connected. This may be the greatest measure of the success of the SHGs, and it is something that cannot be quantified.

The evaluation team found that the establishment of the SHG was an extremely valuable project component, particularly from the perspective of gender equality

> *We became friends; we became supportive to each other. We knew each other, but the relations were not so close before.* **Woman SHG, Asyl-Bash**
>
> *The group activities made us support each other. Before we would just greet, but now we are very interested in each other's life. Before I knew her face, but now I know her character and values and what needs she has, and we can solve some issues together.*
> **Woman SHG, Khalmion**

and inclusion of the most vulnerable. It had a positive impact on women members, but also for the project as a whole, as it made strong linkages between other project components and each was able to mutually reinforce the other. SHG members became active in the WUA, for example, and this would have been beneficial to the WUA from the start of the project if the groups had started sooner.

The late start of the SHG impacted negatively on group prospects for sustainability. Reasons for delays were linked to the need to develop the social passportisation system, and the difficulties encountered

> *Women are active in social life – because we participate in training and get new knowledge and while we increase our knowledge, at the same time, we had the new irrigation supply and these changes are related to each other. With all these positive changes, we see how our lives have eased.*
> **Woman from SHG in Khalmion**

with this and the broader e-governance component. The late establishment of the groups has left insufficient time for members to learn from their actions and grow in knowledge and confidence from their efforts. Of all the groups met by the evaluators, the SHGs were the most dismayed at the close of the project, recognizing themselves that it is too soon to withdraw support. *RAS has provided us with the education and showed us the direction and we should go further. But we are only one year old; maybe in two years, we would have more sustainability but it's a little early.* (Woman from SHG Khalmion)

WUAs
The project focused on capacity building of WUAs to work together with LSGs to provide better quality services and fair water distribution to members with a special focus on the vulnerable and excluded. The project design took into account forecasted water shortages that necessitate improved water management systems and changes in usage with a focus on sustainable water management practice.

Water Users Associations were transformed by the project into institutions that better represented the needs of different constituents, including vulnerable groups, and functioned more effectively to provide fair access to water resources. The project supported the WUAs to fulfill their duties with training and material support. An electronic database system was developed to track water users, expenditures and fee collection with greater transparency.

> *Before, the irrigation process was chaotic. Irrigation was successful for some families before, but now they understand that irrigation should be for all and should be rational and fair….Before, it was as if the community was on one side of the river and the WUA was on the other side.* **Head of Municipality**

The project worked within existing structures to expand leadership and ownership and accountability of the six project WUAs and one water commission. With project support, WUAs designed and implemented action plans to address identified challenges, working together with LSG authorities and other community structures. Collaborative linkages were also established between the WUA and students involved in the MPF and MSPS courses whereby students supported WUA objectives by delivering messages on efficient water use. Linkages were also established with the SHGs.

New space was created through project activities for women to participate in WUA management. At the start of the project, there were only 13 women involved in the six project WUAs; by the end there were 124 spread across all levels and committees as detailed below. Notably, there were no women in any of the WUA Councils or Finance Commissions at the start of the project. Today, women comprise 13.8 percent of WUA Council members, and 36.4 percent of those serving on Finance Commissions. They have gone from holding just 1.7 percent of finance positions to holding 33.3 percent. Women have become increasingly active as Zone Representatives as well, moving from holding just 1.6 percent of positions in 2015 to 29.9 percent in 2018.

Diagram 11 - Women's Participation in WUAs – Before and After

Women in Water Governance - 2015

13

Women in Water Governance - 2018
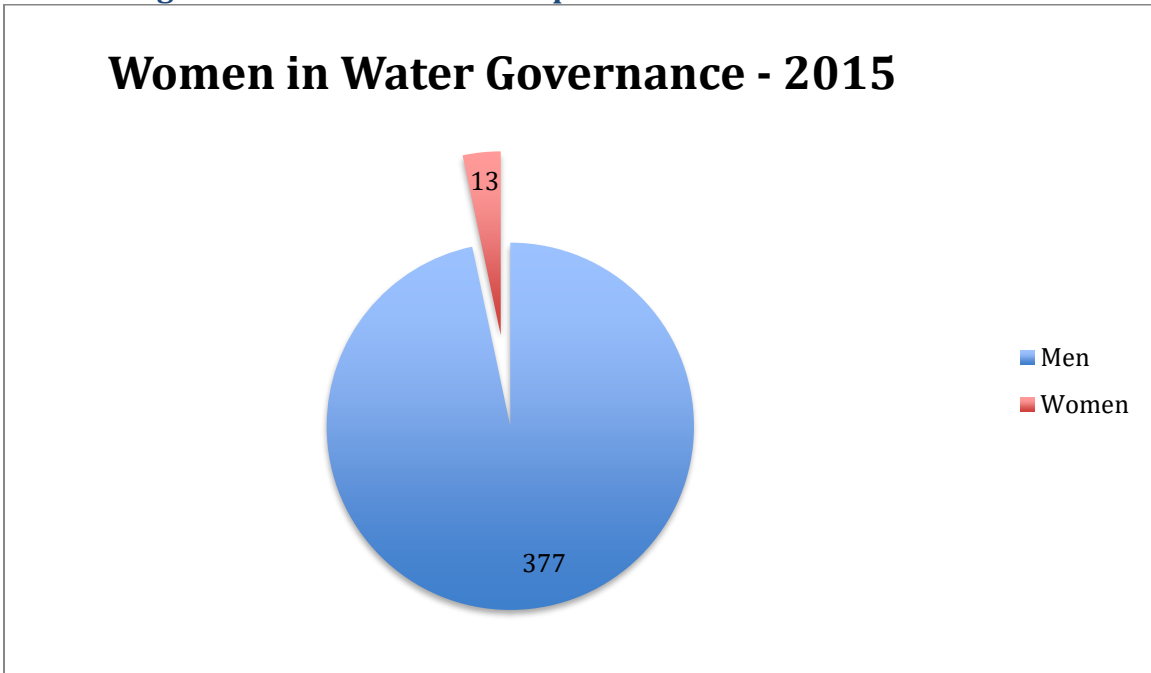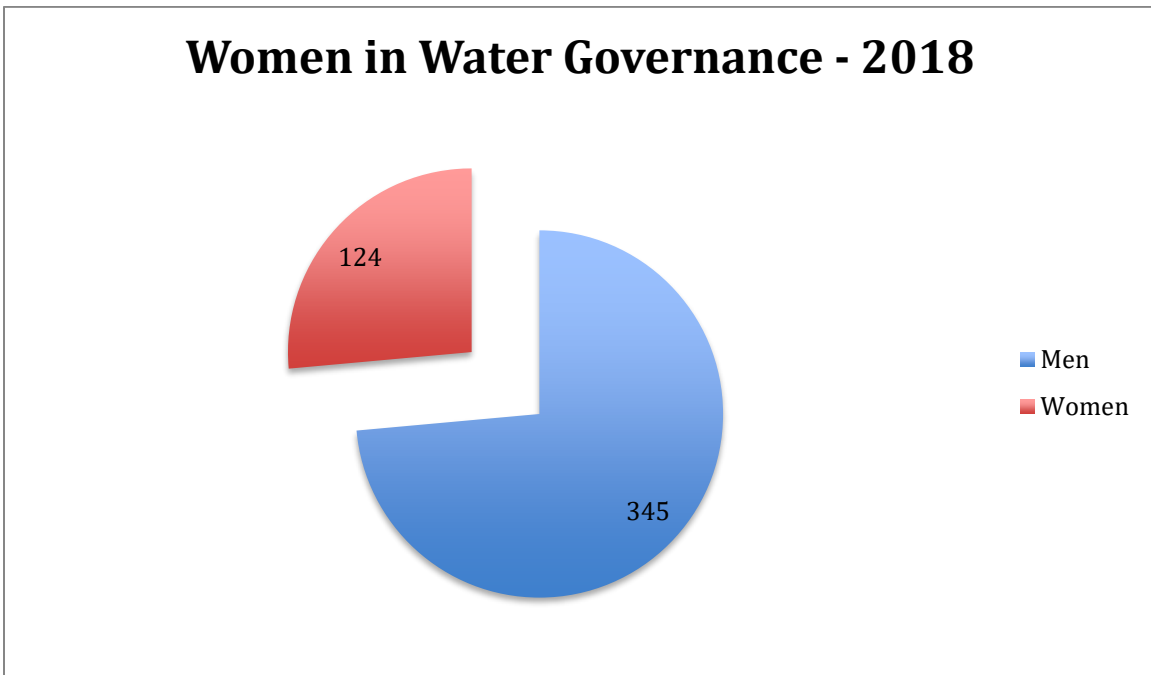
Reasons for results

Women's representation in water governance structures overall has risen from 3.3 percent to 26.4 percent. This is just short of the 30 percent target for critical mass,

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13 Based on combined data of the six WUAs covered by the project.

the generally accepted threshold for a group to be able to achieve change within an organization. This achievement bodes well for the prospects of long-term change in the membership and operations of the WUAs.

> *Before, if we organize a meeting on irrigation, only men would come. Now we also invite women to participate and share their ideas, and women began to express ideas on barriers facing them. We also involved women in the WUA council and notice a new discipline in the group. Involving women in dissemination spread the information fast.* **Head of Municipality**

The project placed considerable emphasis on working with WUAs to understand and target the needs of vulnerable community members including female-headed households or person with disabilities. This was not always straightforward, and required implementers to be <u>creative</u> and <u>persistent</u> with their messaging. Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of including women in WUA management structures with initiatives such as knowledge exchange workshops on project results in July 2017 where WUAs presented their achievements involving women at management and executive boards of WUAs, as well as a training on "Legal basics, gender and equal rights and WUAs" for directors and water distributors. A central training was conducted in September 2017 for newly elected women of pilot management and executive boards to build their capacity in audit and conflict prevention/resolution as well as the legal basis of WUA's activities, the rights and duties of WUA members, and gender sensitive water management.

Gender Results

The evaluation team has identified results throughout this report that have helped to foster gender equality within the seven project communities. Results were enabled in large part due to project investment in securing a skilled gender expert to serve as a technical specialist, while also working to sensitize all RAS JA staff working on the project, especially at the local level, so that gender equality targets were not the responsibility of one specialist, but of the entire team, leading to more effective integration across components.

> *Now we girls have more confidence and gender equality. Before, men were more powerful and women were always listening to them. Now the girls begin to express their opinions. People used to say that women in our community have no knowledge about water, but now the water distributor is a woman.* **Female Student, Khalmion**

Gender equality results were achieved by <u>comprehensive</u> and <u>relevant</u> integration of gender equality strategies in all components individually. Successes in singular components were strengthened by the integration of components, so that groups supported each other to deepen and broaden results. This was one of the project's greatest strengths, creating a multiplier effect across components.

The project was able to challenge traditional gender hierarchies and dynamics without creating overt conflict or backlash. This was accomplished by underpinning change processes with community awareness of legal frameworks and rights. It was also facilitated by a pragmatic approach that allowed beneficiaries to challenge stereotypes through their own actions, creating space for greater female involvement while remaining inclusive of male involvement (e.g. girls and boys both had opportunities to engage in MPF and MSPS activities; women and men serve together on WUA bodies).

10. *The project strategy of empowering youth and engaging LSGs to advocate for gender equality and human rights made a positive contribution to community stability as indicated by: increased livelihood security; higher and more inclusive rates of participation in local governance; and greater institutional connectivity and inclusiveness. Project actions are likely to have helped reduce levels of conflict by addressing community-level 'conflict drivers'.*

The evaluation found that the project strategy of engaging youth and local self-governments to advocate for equality and human rights made an important contribution to fostering more inclusive community development processes. It is difficult to gauge at the close of the project whether communities will remain more stable in the long term, as this can be influenced by many external factors. However, the evaluation team found that project activities have made a positive contribution to community stability. For the purposes of this assessment, the evaluation team defined signs of community stability as:

- Secure livelihoods;
- Higher and more inclusive rates of participation;
- Greater connectivity and inclusiveness;
- Reduced levels of conflict.

As previously noted, the project has contributed to improved <u>livelihood</u> sustainability through agricultural productivity for students and women in SHGs. There are higher rates of <u>participation</u> in community processes including greater involvement of women in WUA management, greater involvement of students in advocacy and community governance issues *vis a vis* the LSG and WUA in particular. Community meetings, once almost solely the domain of men, now include vocal and broad participation of women from all age levels. Furthermore, the project as a whole has helped to <u>connect</u> different aspects of the community to work toward common goals, bringing together, for example, the schools with the LSG to work toward school gardens, and the students and vulnerable women with the WUA to work toward advocacy campaigns. The SHGs in particular have helped to connect women with each other, bringing them out of the isolating confines of their home and enabling them to form new friendships and support systems.

To better understand the likely impact of the project on conflict levels, the evaluation team drew on a list of eight conflict drivers identified under the BCP project as factors contributing to community level conflict. It is presumed that conflict drivers would be similar in the communities covered by the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project, and in fact, some of these communities overlapped. The project made positive contributions to seven of the eight identified conflict drivers as detailed below.

Table 12 – Linkages Between Conflict Drivers and Project Activities

Conflict Driver	Project Actions
Discrimination and exclusion due to ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, language, etc.	Girls and women participating in the project became empowered and gained higher status and participated in decision-making, advocacy and economic livelihoods. Other excluded members of society including those with disabilities were covered by social benefits via social passportisation.
Lack of opportunities to build knowledge and engage in gainful livelihoods' pursuit	Students, women in SHG, teachers and administration gained new knowledge and additional income via agricultural production and processing.
Poverty and increasing social and economic inequalities	Vulnerable and excluded were given special focus for social benefits and project engagement at all levels to help bridge the gap for social and economic inequalities.
Religious fundamentalism and nationalistic extremism	Not directly addressed.
Impunity due to lack of rule of law	Rights holders and duty bearers worked toward transparent, fair processes for social passportisation, receiving of social benefits and access to water resources.
A lopsided understanding among duty bearers and rights holders where in reality the latter serves the former in a personal capacity, rather than the state serving the people and the people obeying the laws	Rights holders and duty bearers were trained on responsibilities to uphold and claim rights; practical steps were taken improve human rights and transparency and legitimate rule of law.
Scarce natural resources (water, land) under contention and competition	Fair access to water resources was central to the project approach and results.
Ineffective service delivery and natural resource administration capacity of local self-government	LSG and WUA were targeted with improved administrative capacities and technological systems (e-governance) to improve service delivery and ensure fair access.

Though the project is likely to have had a positive impact on reducing community conflict, as per the above analysis, it is important to note that the change processes and redistribution of resources that occurred under project activities did bring

about some new conflicts. Not everyone was pleased with new systems that defined 'fair' access, and some community members have lost access to certain benefits in this process. For example, the review of the social passportisation process identified some families that were receiving benefits who did not qualify, and thus their benefits were ceased. The head of the LSG and key staff have had to deal with disgruntled families who do not agree with these decisions. Similarly, some people are dis-satisfied with their current access to irrigation water, and there remain on-going issues for which the WUAs and the LSGs must adjudicate. Despite these issues, those representatives from the LSG and WUA in the three municipalities visited for the evaluation felt that the overall level of conflict in the community around water rights was reduced significantly by project interventions.

11. *The project succeeding in building the capacities of rights-holders, especially students and marginalized women, to advocate for and claim their rights to fair water allocation. At the same time, the project was able to improve the capacities of duty-bearers from LSGs and WUAs to increase the transparency and accuracy of their service delivery while ensuring a special focus on vulnerable women and men.*

The project targeted students and vulnerable women and men to build their capacities to understand and claim their human rights to fair resource allocation and to participation in decision-making processes at the community level. This was done predominantly via the MSPS, MPF and SHG components. Evaluation findings show that the three components were effective in building a stronger knowledge base within the community about human rights and gender equality.

The advocacy components of the student courses were deemed especially effective in spreading the word. While there were some incidents of negative feedback and misunderstanding, door-to-door campaigns conducted by students about water users rights and other subjects were especially effective according to community members. It was felt that people listened in a different way because they respected the students becoming involved in their community issues, and they looked to them as the future of the community, thereby elevating the status not only of the students, but of the messages they delivered. The very process of advocating for gender equality and human rights (as well as other campaigns, for example, on safe water and sanitation) gave students, especially girls, new skills and confidence to find their voice and claim their rights.

The SHGs were an important space within which marginalized women came together and learned about their rights as well as new skills. These groups became important mechanisms for women to grow together, practice new skills and gain confidence in improving their livelihoods, and indeed, their status in the family and the community. Women learned through their interactions in these groups, not only how to claim their own rights, but to support and encourage each other's general welfare, thereby taking steps toward personal empowerment.

The project targeted the LSG and WUA as key duty-bearers that have the responsibility to protect and uphold the rights of others. The project was able to improve the capacities of both groups to increase the transparency and accuracy of their service delivery while ensuring a special focus on vulnerable women and men. This was achieved through the e-governance component that allowed the LSG to efficiently and accurately provide certificates and social passports to constituents. The WUA was transformed into a highly participatory group that involved women and men in decision-making positions. The electronic database and systems, combined with gender and human rights-based training, enabled the WUA to improve service delivery to female-headed households and other vulnerable groups. Moreover, the project has made strategic linkages between rights holders and duty-bearers to join forces and work collaboratively for deeper impact as elaborated throughout this report.

Throughout project implementation, there was good communication with national counterparts to ensure full commitment to and compliance with regulatory frameworks of the KR in relation to issues of exclusion, gender and natural resources management. Partnership-building efforts have resulted in strong relationships between the project and the following institutions:

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic: expertise on social passportisation.

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic: management, monitoring and maintaining the use of water resources, irrigation and melioration infrastructure and coordination the implementation of the state water policy.

- The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic: to educate a new generation of gender advocates.

- National Statistics Committee: statistics, social passportisation, data on marginalized groups, number of eligible families for state social allowance.

- The State Agency on Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic: strengthening the collaboration with the LSGs, school administrations and Water User Associations.

12. *While some monitoring activities, including field missions, Back To Office Reports (BTORs), and progress reports, supported good M&E functions, the project Results Framework was of limited use in guiding project activities, particularly at the outcome level. The Results Framework tracked a limited scope of data , and key data and analysis was not available until the end of the project when it was too late to impact on operations.*

The project utilized a formal M&E framework that was designed at the start of the

project to measure progress toward outcomes and outputs. The complete framework is detailed in Table 8. While efforts were made, the framework had not been tracked well as a stand-alone tool, so it was not updated sufficiently to reflect additions or changes in thinking, suggesting it was not serving its purpose well to monitor and guide processes.[14] The M&E framework was found by the evaluation team to be of limited use in guiding project progress. There were several reasons for this as elaborated previously and continued below.

The project results framework, as originally designed, did not well capture the full scope of the project, and some of the projects stellar achievements around inclusivity, women's empowerment and gender equality were entirely missing from the framework. Targets were not sex-disaggregated, though the project did adjust for this by providing disaggregated data in most cases. The framework lacks any measure of women's leadership or empowerment. Furthermore, for a project that was focused on community stability, there were no measures of conflict or perceptions of conflicts within communities. This could have easily been added to the entry and exit survey, if only to offer indicative data on community perceptions.

The results framework included three outcome and seven output level indicators as follows.

Table 13 – Project Indicators by Outcome and Output

Level and Number	Indicator
Outcome 1	Percentage of people surveyed who have adopted at least one of the measures to use water effectively recommended through students' advocacy actions
Output 1.1a	Number of students enrolled in MPF course who have improved knowledge and skills on sustainable agricultural practices
Output 1.1b	Number of students who have used knowledge on the efficient agricultural production and water use in their kitchen garden plots or school demonstration sites
Output 1.1c	Percentage change in yields received by students compared to average yields in their communities
Output 1.2	Number of people reached by advocacy actions for equal and efficient use of land and water resources implemented by school students in their communities
Output 1.3	Number of WASH facilities renovated in schools and their quality of renovation

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[14] The evaluation team spent a lot of time working with key staff members to gather and interpret data for the results framework, as there were a lot of gaps and data was scattered across different documents, and required further analysis and discussion to reveal trends. Data difficulties were further complicated by the existence of other reporting frameworks held by UN Women and the donor, which used elements of the project M&E data, but were not fully aligned in terms of either indicators or frequency of reporting.

Outcome 2.a	Percentage of people satisfied with the services of LSG in relation to ensuring equal access to water resources
Outcome 2.b	Percentage increase in the number of newly identified water users by WUAs (covering potentially excluded groups, such as female headed households, disabled people, etc.)
Output 2.1	Percentage increase of newly identified people eligible for social allowances
Output 2.2	Percentage increase in water fee collection in WUAs

The output level indicators under Outcome 1 were monitored regularly, showing progress toward or exceeding targets for delivery on training and advocacy, etc. Output indicators under Outcome 2 posed difficulties in defining the data parameters and gathering data, as elaborated earlier.

Outcome level indicators posed a different set of challenges. The indicators relied on baseline and end point data of community perceptions. This model offered no chance over the course of a 2.5 year project to check to see if outputs were having the expected impact on outcomes, therefore leaving no time for adjustments if it was found at the close of the project that original hypotheses were incorrect.

The baseline survey was administered to 130 people across all municipalities in Sep-Oct 2016 to define the pre-project condition. However, he survey was conducted a full year after the start of the project. Criteria for selection included sex (50/50 m/f), irrigation zone (1/3 from upper, middle and lower irrigation areas), and social status (20% vulnerable families). The composition included 24 housewives, 26 pensioners, 66 farmers, 5 teachers and 9 others. The end line survey was conducted in January 2018, just 15 months after the baseline survey. In total 170 people (77 men and 93 women) participated in the survey including 14 percent of participants from vulnerable families. The composition included 20 housewives, 18 pensioners, 112 farmers , 7 teachers and 11 others.

The baseline survey appears to have been utilized for dual purposes, as a combination of a survey and a needs assessment. The survey was conducted by a combination of focus groups involving specialists and leaders as well as individual interviews with water users. The task was focused on understanding: 1) effective irrigation method use by members of target villages; 2) equitable use of water resources; and 3) WUA executive person potential. Based on the findings of the survey, which also served as a needs assessment, the seven municipalities identified challenges and developed action plans to address the challenges

The data contained within the end line survey offers some valuable insights into practices and perceptions, but there were some inherent design flaws in having the survey administered by one of the key implementing agencies (whose work, ultimately, was being judged). While careful attention was paid to ensure that survey respondents represented a cross-section of water zones, male/females, vulnerable groups – it still remains unclear to the evaluators after repeated queries

and document review, how exactly people were selected from within these groups, raising questions as to how representative the sample may be for the entire community. The sample must be randomly selected to remove the risk of a biased selection process – in this case, the risk would be that survey respondents known to the project would be more likely to have engaged with the project and project staff and offer positive responses than those who are randomly selected.

Other means of monitoring (such as activity level monitoring, field missions, Back To Office Reports (BTORs), progress reports and the donor scorecard) supported good M&E functions. The Coordination Council met bi-annually, and oversight included visits to the project sites to observe components.

> *They (project implementers) brought high-level officials to our municipality and we could deliver our achievements to the people from the Ministries. A very good approach from their side. We had 14 official bodies represented here.* **Head of Municipality**

CC monitoring visits proved to be positive from two perspectives. First, they offered stakeholders a chance to understand the project more holistically, thereby positively influencing engagement and ownership. Second, visits to communities by high levels officials elevated the status of the project and the importance of the participant activities in the eyes of participants and beneficiaries. Participants felt honored and important to be selected to share their experiences, thereby growing in confidence and sense of worth.

5.3 Efficiency

13. *Despite a slow start-up, the project strategically allocated resources to successfully achieve and exceed planned outcomes within the parameters of the set budget and timeframe.   Project efficiency was enhanced by a design and implementation strategy that leveraged off of relevant successful models within the country across components.*

The project has strategically allocated resources to achieve and exceed the planned outcomes within the parameters of the budget. This is the most general measure of project efficiency. Looking more closely, few finances were spent in the first year of the project.[15] While this pattern is consistent with projects that focus on capacity development, it does appear that the project took a long period of time up front to lay the groundwork and prepare for field activities, given that the total project duration was just 2.5 years. Most field activities occurred in the second year of operations, and activities ran smoothly from this point on with lots of activities working together, leading to good results. Seen from this light, investments up front in human resources to ensure procedural and institutional readiness seemed to have been well spent. *In this project, they did not hand us any money, but in this*

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[15] The opening balance 1 Jan 2016 was 480,110 USD. The closing balance 30 Sep 2016 was 456,722 USD. First Progress Report, Annex 8 – Interim Financial Report 30 Sep 2016.

*project, a lot of change happened. (*Head of Municipality)

The selection of the RAS JA as a key project implementer had ramifications in terms of travel costs and times for technical experts to reach municipalities as well as for project participants to reach training sites in Jalalabad. It was queried over the course of the evaluation as to why the project did not work with the RAS or other institutions linked to each of the three provinces within which the project operated. It emerged that RAS JA had a unique set of skills and expertise, with a proven capacity to deliver on project components that was not available through other RAS. The additional costs incurred for travel, therefore, appear to have been warranted in view of the high quality methodological approach and service delivery provided.

The project worked strategically during design and implementation to build upon and leverage off of relevant work in Kyrgyzstan. For example, the work to strengthen the WUAs built on the work done in the mid-1990s at the national level to establish WUAs with support from the World Bank and Asia Development Bank, which institutionalized WUAs throughout KR.[16] The project worked to restructure and strengthen these existing groups in target municipalities, thereby deepening the impact within existing systems, rather than starting from scratch.

In a similar fashion, the project team efficiently drew upon available resources that had proven track records to inform the development of various project components. The AIMAK electronic governance system pulled from the standards and lessons from pre-existing systems including "Berkut" and UNDPs work with the Kyrgyz Government to develop e-governance tools and strategies. The Water and Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component worked with UNICEF to draw from their standards and expertise in this arena. The MPF and MSPS components were adapted and tailored to the project goals based on highly successful models that had been designed and implemented under other programs.

The abovementioned efficiency patterns are imbedded in UN Women Kyrgyzstan's strategic approach to integrate successful activities and elements into several projects when appropriate in order to minimize costs and maximize efficiency. The approach was both effective and efficient in the case of the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project.

14.
The project management structure functioned in a supportive and collaborative manner with UN Women and RAS JA working effectively as a team to deliver results under the guidance of the Coordination Council. Project efficiency was enhanced by commitment and continuity of key personnel within RAS JA and UN Women over the project duration.

The project was executed by UN Women Kyrgyzstan, and was overseen and managed by an international Project Specialist who provided overall guidance and

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[16] See, for example, Sehring (2005)
http://geb.uni-giessen.de/geb/volltexte/2005/2392/pdf/ZEUDiscPap24.pdf

strategic advice as a part of a wider role within UN Women KR (cost shared position). Day to day operations of the project were primarily conducted by the Project Coordinator and the Project Specialist, who worked closely with the RAS JA Project Coordinator. The RAS JA Project Coordinator oversaw field operations managed by technical experts in agriculture and irrigation with strong backgrounds in participatory community development processes. RAS JA also used an expert on e-governance and a gender expert, who both proved highly effective working adeptly at the local level as well as at higher policy levels.

The Coordination Council established to oversee the project included state and civil society partners, a donor representative, and UN Women. UN Women functioned as the Council's Secretariat. The CC met bi-annually, and stakeholders were regularly invited to participate in meetings, events and community-level monitoring missions. While some turnover of members was noted, the CC proved to be an effective oversight modality, which facilitated linkages between policy and project, and helped instil broader national ownership of results.

There was strong continuity of key personnel over the duration of the project for both UN Women and RAS JA, which had a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of results. Community members knew project personnel by name, and relationships were strengthened over time. The evaluation team found evidence of good working relationships established between the responsible party and implementing agency, which also impacted positively on the workings of the management structure. Both teams took a problem-solving approach to challenges as they emerged, and made decisions collaboratively on operational issues.

The evaluation team found good evidence that UN Women management functioned in a supportive and responsive manner. Moreover, RAS JA and UN Women were able to work collaboratively to tackle challenges. Issues around e-governance offer a case in point. The e-governance component was envisioned during the design phase as a relatively straightforward means to an end of better identification and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Instead, the project entered into a complex set of issues pertaining to national reporting standards, language and interpretation on forms and certificates, and disjointed databases and stakeholders. Project personnel tackled these issues in creative ways, resulting in a pilot initiative that holds significant potential for national-level up-scaling. This would not have been possible without a collaborative management structure that allowed information to move efficiently, not only from top to bottom, but from bottom to top, and side to side.

> *Every activity is related to staff, and they (the project) have the best staff members and they managed to make me pay attention to the project. They have been working until 7 or 8pm and training was actively conducted.* **Head of Municipality**
>
> *RAS hired encouraging staff members who were motivating us and making us very interested. Good community mobilization skills. Thanks to UN Women and RAS, they have explained what I have not known before with simple words and without conflict.* **Woman SHG Khalmion**

The evaluation team utilized a '360' approach to gather feedback from stakeholders working in different capacities with UN Women and RAS JA. See diagrams below. Assessments were universally positive from all angles of interaction. In particular, RAS JA was rated exceptionally high by participants/beneficiaries for their ability to work effectively at the local level. Beneficiaries appreciated the ability of RAS JA staff to teach in a simple and clear manner, and to work in a style that conveyed respect and appreciation for beneficiary knowledge and experiences.

Diagram 14 – 360 Degrees Assessment of Project Implementors' Performance

360 of RAS JA
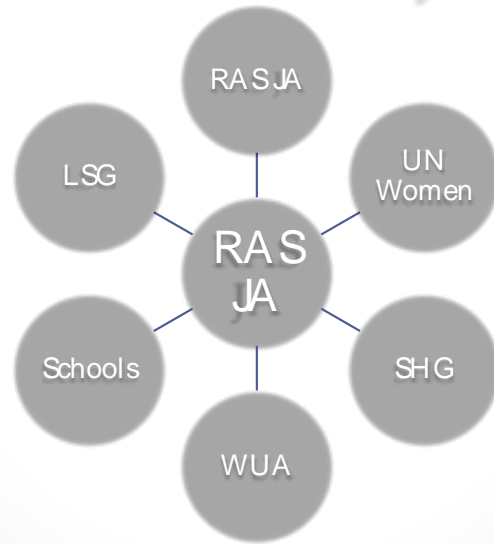
15. *Project outputs were delivered in a timely manner despite some delays in start-up activities and filling some staff positions in the first year of implementation .*

The project outputs have generally (but not universally) been delivered in a timely manner. The evaluation team notes that the project had a slow start-up phase with delays in starting some activities and filling some key staff placements.[17] Unforeseen complexities with the e-governance system also contributed to a later start for some project activities that were seen as dependent on services delivered by the database system (e.g. establishment of SHGs delayed until social passportisation was established). Timing issues, as detailed in relevant sections of this report, ultimately did not impede on the ability of the project to achieve its desired outcomes.

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[17] The UN Women Project Coordinator joined in April 2016, while the recruitment of other project personnel was still pending after the inception phase (Oct 2015 – Mar 2016) and targeted for July 2016 (nine months after official start of project), including the international Programme Specialist, Project Specialist and Driver. The International Programme Specialist was only budgeted for one year under the project, so was brought in on a cost-sharing basis with another project. RAS JA was fully staffed by the end of the inception period with the exception of the gender specialist (UN Women, Inception Report, 2016).

5.4 Sustainability

16. *There is a very good likelihood that project benefits will continue for a reasonably long period of time after the project close. Identified changes in behaviours at the personal and institutional level should continue to impact positively on target municipalities well into the future.*

The "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" will close operationally on 30 June 2018. However, this does not mark the end of the project, but the point at which project management ends. The question of sustainability is a complicated one, and there are always unforeseen variables, but the project offers good indications that changes made at the personal and institutional levels will continue to impact positively into the future.

At the personal level, the project has offered people opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge. In particular, school students (especially girls), teachers, administrators and vulnerable women have benefited from courses and training. In turn, they have been able to transfer information to relatives, friends and the broader community via advocacy campaigns. These benefits and measurable changes in livelihood practices (e.g. agriculture, irrigation, preservation, marketing, small business establishment, heating efficiency) are likely to sustainable for many in the long term. At the institutional level, partnerships forged between stakeholders are likely to carry forward without external intervention, if fueled by continued successes.

Project staff worked with local level stakeholders from all seven communities to develop 'sustainability plans' during the Final Field Day held in Uch-Korgon 19 May 2018. Stakeholders teamed up within their counterparts from other municipalities to develop action plans within the following groups: LSG, WUA, SHG, MPF students, MPF teachers and principals, and MSPS students. The sustainability plans represent a positive step on the part of the project to help stakeholders transition into the post-project phase by identifying key activities and responsibilities that they wish to take forward. Plans include activities, timing and responsibilities, but they do not mention resources. An additional column on resource needs (both human and financial) would have helped ensure in the planning stage that resources were understood and available as required.

The sustainability plans demonstrate the success that the project has had in creating linkages between the different institutions. The LSG plans include activities and oversight with the schools, SHG and WUAs. The SHG plans to participate in meetings of the WUA and LSG. The school plans include initiatives that involve parents and the broader community for information sharing and advocacy. Furthermore, the sustainability plans demonstrate that the project focus on gender

equality and human rights has been well integrated into all group activities as evidenced by plans. Examples include:

- LSG to allocate a land plot in each village of the municipality for SHG activities;
- WUA to ensure gender balance principles in public gatherings;
- WUA to create opportunities for women to actively participate in water governance;
- WUA to ensure provision of water to vulnerable groups;
- MSPS peer educators and students to organize advocacy campaigns on elimination of violence against women and girls;
- Create support groups of students to help socially vulnerable with small initiatives (Pushkin School in Uch-Korgon).

The evaluation team concluded that sustainability likelihood was strong to moderate for project benefits to continue for a reasonably long period of time as outlined below. WhatsApp and FB groups that were formed around project components and trainings were still in use at the time of the evaluation, and offer good prospects for future coordination and communication.

Table 15 – Sustainability Predictions

Component by Institution	Likelihood of Sustainability	Influencing Factors
LSG	Strong	User-friendly e-governance system; motivated by efficiency; low cost to sustain; high return on time investment
WUA	Moderate to strong	Critical mass of female change agents; motivated by efficient operations; low cost to sustain database
Schools	Strong	High degrees of ownership; self-replicating models; motivated by successes
SHG	Moderate	High degrees of enthusiasm but no proven results in terms of business successes

17. *National stakeholders from key institutions displayed a high degree of ownership over project results, articulating commitments and plans to take forward relevant aspects of the project especially in relation to integrating MPF/MSPS components into national curriculum and drawing on the AIMAK model for national e-governance systems.*

National stakeholders whose work relates directly to different project components have been involved throughout the project as partners. The members of the Coordination Council - Ministry of the Labor and Social Development, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration, State

Agency on Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations as well as representatives from civil society and the Government more broadly - have been active participants in project monitoring and direction, and are well informed about the project activities and results, particularly those aspects that relate directly to their own spheres of work.

The evaluation found that representatives from key stakeholder groups displayed a high degree of ownership over the project. This sentiment was well articulated at a evaluation briefing meeting for national stakeholders where evaluators referred to the project simply as a "UN Women's project" and were corrected by those national stakeholders present at the workshop with the simple statement, "*It's our project too*." Stakeholders articulated clear commitment and plans for taking forward relevant aspects of the project within their own institutions including taking advantage of upcoming opportunities to work toward integrating MPF/MSPS components in national curriculum and to feed project models into national e-governance development processes.

18. *Stakeholders have promoted project successes well, thereby expanding the visibility of successful practices and promoting replication within and between communities. The MSF/MSPS and AIMAK components, in particular, hold good promise for up-scaling to the national level.*

Project stakeholders at all levels have been vocal and visible in disseminating information about activities and results to promote replication of successes. Some of this has been done informally and opportunistically through networks, while some has been more formal through media, forums and other platforms at district and national levels.

Replication has occurred spontaneously within communities with the spread and uptake of new practices around agriculture, irrigation, hygiene, food preservation, etc. Stakeholders have also disseminated success stories and good practices between communities in organized 'events', providing opportunities for beneficiaries to take ownership of their successes and innovations. For example, high-performing schools were provided a platform to present their achievements under the MPF/MSPS components at districts forums, and to share their experiences with other schools for possible replication.

A study tour under the leadership of the Sector on LSG within the Government Offices was organized in March 2018 as part of wider efforts on replication and up-scaling project results beyond the pilot municipalities. The tour included representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, National Statistics Committee, Ministry of Economy, State Agency on LSG and Interethnic Relations, State Registration Office, and the Government Committee on IT and Communications. Participants observed the function of the e-governance system developed within the project in two municipalities (Uch-Korgon and Khalmion) in Batken Province, and met with beneficiaries, municipality heads and technical

staff to discuss lessons learned, challenges and way forward on usage of the e-governance system, social passportisation and public services provision related to certificate issuance.

Up-scaling evidence and further opportunities at the close of the project identified with national stakeholders include:

- E-governance and social passports – AIMAK serves as model for national e-governance, and key players are in place and engaged in on-going developments with relevant stakeholders;

- MPF and MSPS adopted by Scientific Council under the Kyrgyz Academy of Education and key actors in place within the Ministry to engage those that are developing the news standards for Grades 1-11 curriculum;

- UN Women work with partners to utilize the MPF/MSPS model in other projects including a new project on preventing violent extremism.

19. *The project design successfully embedded the exit philosophy within operations to foster sustainability at the close of the project, leaving behind a critical mass of empowered change agents to continue without further external inputs. A smooth handover will require ensuring local control over key electronic resources (software, templates and materials) at project close.*

The project did not have a comprehensive exit <u>strategy</u> as much as it had an exit <u>philosophy</u>. Essentially, the project was designed in a way that the exit strategy was embedded in operations, and designed to be sustainable at project close. Specifically:

- financial investments at local levels were inclusive of beneficiary-owned strategies for meeting recurrent costs;

- operational linkages established between WUA and LSG to monitor/facilitate fair water distribution in the context of informed rights-holders;

- replication of MPF and MSPS courses within schools embedded in process, and knowledge retained by students and teachers;

- institutional stakeholder relationships consolidated during the project to build on success and carry forward without need for further guidance.

Essentially, the project aimed to leave behind a critical mass of empowered change agents (individuals and institutions) that could continue activities without further external support. The philosophy worked well to a large degree, but without a distinct 'exit strategy' there emerged a few loose ends at the time of the evaluation that required attention at close of project, and have been highlighted in recommendations.

6 - Conclusions

6.1 Relevance

6.1.1 The project worked to support key national development strategies and international commitments while remaining highly relevant to the needs of the target communities, including the most vulnerable beneficiaries. Project relevance was enhanced by capitalizing on UN Women's comparative advantage to make critical linkages between the policy and grassroots levels, thereby allowing the project to serve as a model for operationalizing national commitments to natural resource management, participatory local governance, gender equality and human rights attainment.

Key factors that positively influenced project relevance:

- The focus on the vulnerable or marginalized segments of society was well targeted to the needs of 'those furthest behind', and remained central to all aspects of the project;

- The project worked with both duty-bearers and rights-holders in all component areas to operationalize gender and human rights principles in a manner that was relevant and meaningful to the lives of participants;

- The project served as a catalyst for change by working across individual, family and institutional levels to address root causes of inequalities in participation and access to water;

- The project contributed to key national development strategies, including the National Sustainable Development Strategy, National Education Development Strategy, 'Tazakoom', the National Strategy on the Achievement of Gender Equality, Priority Directions for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Kyrgyz Republic as well as laws and codes governing water usage in the country;

- Project interventions were well aligned with international agreements and conventions including the Sustainable Development Goals, Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and UN SCR1325;

- The project was strategically aligned with the key UN planning frameworks, making contributions to the four priorities of the UNDAF as well as the UN Women Country Office Strategic Note.

6.2 Effectiveness

6.2.1 The project delivered its planned results, and met or exceeded the intent of the project indicators at the outcome and output level. The following factors were found to have a positive impact on project performance:

- The project design marked a **strategic shift in thinking** away from a focus on scarcity of water to address the fair distribution of limited water resources from an exclusion point of view.

- The project **selection process** of working with communities that were ready and willing to make changes in how they functioned was a foundational element to project achievements.

- The project brought about, not only stronger institutions, but **greater connectivity between institutions**.

- The **hands-on approach to community development** coupled with a **step-by-step approach to learning** undertaken by RAS JA and UN Women built people's **confidence** and belief in themselves, leading to a broader **empowerment** process.

6.2.2 Project activities targeted all relevant levels (individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policy) to bring about change in line with behavioural change theory. The project strategy of empowering youth and engaging LSGs to advocate for gender equality and human rights made a positive contribution to community stability as indicated by: increased livelihood security; higher and more inclusive rates of participation in local governance; and greater institutional connectivity and inclusiveness. Project actions are likely to have helped reduce levels of conflict by addressing community-level 'conflict drivers'.

6.2.3 The project succeeding in building the capacities of rights-holders, especially students and marginalized women, to advocate for and claim their rights to fair water allocation. At the same time, the project was able to improve the capacities of duty-bearers from LSGs and WUAs to increase the transparency and accuracy of their service delivery while ensuring a special focus on vulnerable women and men.

6.2.4 The results framework failed to capture some of the projects most significant successes, particularly in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. While some monitoring activities, including field missions, Back To Office Reports (BTORs), and progress reports, supported good M&E functions, the Results Framework was of limited use in guiding project activities, particularly at the outcome level. The framework tracked a limited scope of data, and key data and analysis was not available until the end of the project.

6.3 Efficiency
6.3.1 The project strategically allocated resources to achieve and exceed the planned outcomes within the parameters of the budget. Project efficiency was enhanced by a design and implementation strategy that leveraged off of relevant successful models within the country across components. Project outputs were delivered in a timely manner despite some delays in start-up activities and filling some staff positions in the first year of implementation.

6.3.2 The project management structure supported project efficiency, with UN Women and RAS JA working effectively as a team to tackle challenges and deliver results under the guidance of the Coordination Council. Efficiency was further enhanced by high levels of staff competence and commitment, coupled with low turnover rates, enhancing positive relationships and building trust between staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

6.4 Sustainability

6.4.1 Project benefits are very likely to continue for a reasonably long period of time after the project close. Identified changes in behaviours at the personal and institutional level should continue to impact positively on target municipalities well into the future. Representatives from key national agencies displayed high degrees of ownership over the project, articulating plans for taking forward relevant aspects of the project within their own institutions and spheres of expertise.

6.4.2 Stakeholders promoted project activities well, thereby expanding the visibility of successful practices and promoting replication within and between communities. The MSF/MSPS and AIMAK components, in particular, hold good promise for up-scaling to the national level.

6.4.3 The project design successfully embedded the exit philosophy within operations to foster sustainability at the close of the project, leaving behind a critical mass of empowered change agents to continue without further external inputs. A smooth handover will require ensuring local control over key electronic resources (software, templates and materials) at project close.

7 - Lessons Learned/Lessons Confirmed

The lessons listed below were not necessarily 'learned' by the project, as many were well understood, and were simply tested and refined during the design and implementation of the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project. Nevertheless, the project held important lessons that should help inform future work in Kyrgyzstan.

Innovative approach to sustainable resource management. The project focus on fair distribution of limited water resources instead of a more traditional focus on volume and infrastructure was confirmed as effective and efficient, and likely sustainable. The model represented a significant shift in approaches to community-level natural resource management. It furthermore enabled a comprehensive integration of gender equality and human rights into activities, leading to more equitable access to marginalized groups.

Strong site selection. Investment up front in time and resources to select communities and institutions that are the right fit for the project was an important factor in project success. The selection process should be methodical and transparent, and include criteria that look at both 'hard' and 'soft' data including attitudes and capacities of decision-makers as a measure of institutional readiness.

Student power. The project revealed that students, who are not typically considered as central to natural resource management, have untapped potential as agents of community change. Students served as highly effective advocates for change working through formal and informal channels. At the same time, students (especially girls) engagement with project activities built their knowledge, skills and confidence. For many, the impact may be felt over the course of their lives, and into the next generation.

Mindful M&E. Project experiences reinforced the importance of investing time and resources up front to ensure that the M&E framework well measures the aim of the project and can effectively highlight achievements. Key indicators should also be monitored in a timely manner so that corrections may be made if things are not going according to plan.

Empowerment is a process. Empowerment is a slow and uneven process that takes time. Groups and individuals must be afforded the time to develop new skills and try new approaches so that successes can be realized and reinforced. Group formation should be a priority focus early in the project cycle to allow time for participants to develop and grow under project guidance.

Critical connections. Project successes were directly linked to the ability to create new connections and channels of communication across the community between

individuals and institutions. Connections strengthened results within individual components, and broke down traditional power structures around age, gender, and social status.

8 - Recommendations

Recommendations are based on the evaluations findings and analysis, taking into account the lessons learned and feedback offered during the course of the evaluation. Many of the recommendation ideas were discussed generally with stakeholders, including the ERG and EMG, during the in-country mission, but the final formulation came only after the thorough analysis was completed post-mission. Recommendations are designed for UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office in order to inform future programming.

Recommendation 1 – Pilot Efforts to Reach Challenging Communities/ Institutions. Project components worked well where leaders and decision makers were interested and supportive, and indeed the project screened for this during site selection. Working with individuals and institutions with a relatively high capacity allowed the project to produce results with less effort and resources and increase efficiency and effectiveness. This approach, however, can have the unintended effect of eschewing 'those furthest behind' with lower capacities and/or readiness. Now that the project has established an effective model of community development with an integrated focus on gender equality and human rights, future projects should expand their work to include 'challenge' communities or institutions that do not meet 'readiness' criteria. Models may vary, but future project design should include at least one or two 'challenge' communities (or 'challenge' institutions such as schools) as a means of testing new ideas for working effectively in more difficult contexts. By including less able communities or institutions, a dynamic may emerge that 'pulls' the lower performers to a higher level as they share ideas and 'compete' with others, who may serve as models and mentors.

Recommendation 2 – Engage Stakeholders Actively from the Start. The Coordination Council proved to be an effective mechanism for linking policy actors to local level initiatives, and expanding project ownership to national stakeholders. Field visits, in particular, were identified as critical to engagement of stakeholders from higher levels, and served the additional purpose of elevating the status of communities who felt empowered by the visits of high-level delegates. Future projects should involve government and civil society stakeholders in field-level project oversight from the inception phase of the project, and budgets should be drafted accordingly. Stakeholders should also be engaged in design of M&E frameworks to provide strategic inputs into data availability as well as alignment with Government policies.

Recommendation 3 – Prioritize M&E at Design, Implementation and End Phase. Dedicate the necessary human and financial resources up front to build a better M&E system that has smart indicators that accurately reflect the intended project results and are in line with stakeholder policies. Ensure that outcome indicators are monitored, at the very least, at a mid-point, to be able to guide project

direction. Surveys should be designed to serve a single purpose first and foremost, and not be conflated with planning. Survey selection process may target by social grouping (e.g. sex, class, location), but selections from within groups should be random to improve generalizability of findings. Outsource key monitoring elements such as surveys to independent external experts for greater reliability and impartiality.

Recommendation 4 – Continue Work to Upscale AIMAK At the close of the project, it is important that key stakeholders/experts continue to work outside of the project structure to communicate lessons and successes of the AIMAK pilot to key national agencies as well as donors (including UNDP, WB and ADB) working on digital transformation projects in KR. Recommendations drafted collectively by the responsible secretaries of the seven project municipalities related to the local level needs to support e-governance systems must be carried forward officially by and systematically.

To this end, key personnel who have been engaged in this project component from RAS JA, UN Women and other stakeholder agencies may want to create a formal 'sharing' mechanism (such as a social media group or a list of email recipients) to ensure that communication remains open within the group, thereby helping spur momentum and allowing each to leverage off of the work of others as opportunities emerge.

Linkages should also be maintained with community level users of the e-governance system, who have identified the following outstanding needs from the higher levels:
- Provide unified forms for certificates;
- Support with maps of municipalities through State Registry Services;
- Support in having adopted the Household Book template;
- Expand the content of the Household Book model;
- Review the possibility of information exchange between 'Tazakoom' windows at post offices (identification, registration of citizenship, passport and tax related services).

Recommendation 5 – Further Support Self-Help Groups. Provide more comprehensive, individualized support to SHGs at close of project to look at annual work plans and sustainability plans, and identify resource needs and avenues of support after the close of project. Ensure linkages are well established between the LSG and SHGs, so that the LSGs can provide oversight and support over the next stage. Provide small funding at project close for RAS JA to continue to moderate SHG WhatsApp groups actively and to support group functions, working to transition groups into new operations on social media with leaders serving as moderators. UN Women and RAS JA should also seek out opportunities to link SHGs into other networks or projects if any opportunities emerge (e.g. through the upcoming PVE project or other projects that implementers may be involved in down the road).

Recommendations 6 – Facilitate Formal Handover of Electronic Resources.
Key stakeholders at the community level must be provided with necessary
electronic resources to continue operations in the post-project period. While there
may be informal plans for this to take place, the absence of a formal exit strategy
resulted in a certain amount of uncertainty as to who would take responsibility, and
how and when this handover would occur. UN Women should work with RAS JA to
create a 'handover list' of all electronic resources, and the appropriate recipient to
ensure that tools go directly to the responsible stakeholder institution. For example,
the LSG should have a file backup for the 'Aimak' software as well as the electronic
template for household booklets and certificates. WUAs should have backup
software for their database systems as well as templates for advocacy materials.
Schools should have electronic versions of course materials including templates for
all advocacy tools and materials to be adapted and reproduced in future.

**Recommendation 7 – Leverage off of RAS JA Strengths to Build Capacities of
RAS Network**. The Responsible Party, RAS JA, provided to the project a unique set
of skills and services that were critical to project successes. Throughout the project
implementation, RAS JA staff was able to deepen knowledge and pilot new practices
and approaches, thereby further strengthening their skills. The skill set evidenced
in RAS JA does not seem to be held by Rural Advisory Services in other provinces
throughout KR. Future project work with RAS JA should consider providing
opportunities for RAS in target provinces to develop their capacities through project
involvement and collaboration with RAS JA, thereby strengthening the national
network of RAS and improving rural community access to resources within
provinces.

Annex A – Evaluation Terms of Reference

Re-advertisement: International Team Leader for final evaluation of the project *Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water*

Location:	**Home-based, Bishkek and project sites**
Application Deadline:	28 March 2018
Primary Category:	Women, Peace & Security
Type of Contract:	Special Service Agreement (SSA)
Languages Required:	Proficient English, working knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz is an asset
Starting Date: (date when the selected candidate is expected to start)	30 April 2018
Expected Duration of Assignment:	Between 30 April 2018 and 28 June 2018 (estimated 28 working days)

I. Background (programme/project context)

The creation of UN Women in July 2010 came about as part of the UN reform agenda, consolidating the Organization's resources and mandates on gender equality for greater impact. The mandate of UN-Women calls on UN Women to have universal coverage, strategic presence and ensure closer linkages between the norm-setting inter-governmental work and operations at the field level. UN Women is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to i) support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms, ii) to help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it and to forge effective partnerships with civil society, and iii) to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress and mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN. Since 2001 UN Women (previously as its predecessor entity UNIFEM) has implemented catalytic initiatives on promoting women's economic, political and social rights. In 2012 a Country Office with Delegation of Authority (DOA) was established in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The political situation in Kyrgyzstan was fragile after its independence in 1991 followed by instability and change of Governments in 2005 and, in June 2010 amid political and social tensions, violence erupted in the southern regions which led to the violence between ethnic populations.

At the same time, disagreements over the borderline among Central Asian countries continue to lead to misunderstandings and distrust between neighbouring communities, exacerbating existing tensions over natural resources, and preventing the resolution of crucial developmental and societal challenges. Conflict drivers, such as competition over other natural resources (water, land and pasture), high levels of (youth) unemployment and out-migration are remaining high in Kyrgyzstan.

In long term climate change, with has already been linked to a 30 percent reduction of glaciers in the mountains, will lead to lower water availability. This is likely to cause economic shocks and strains on the rural population, especially women of targeted regions, in the long run further exacerbating conflicts over natural resources.

The efforts from the Government and the UN for the past years contributed to increased stability in the southern regions and in the country in general.

Given the above context, initiatives that support women's and men resilience and mitigate the negative impact of climate change contribute to peacebuilding effect.

The UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office's Women, Peace and Security portfolio has been working on peacebuilding and providing support at the policy level especially on the implementation of UNSCR1325 and at the national and community levels implementing a number of projects focused on empowering of women and their participation in peacebuilding, conflict management and equal access to natural resources for sustaining peace and development.

One of its projects which is focusing on equal access to natural resources and effective management of water is being implemented the FinWaterWei II Government of Finland-funded programme implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is called: *''Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources, and enhanced ability to use water efficiently"* with a short title *"Livelihoods through participation and equal access to water".*

II. Description of the programme/project: *Livelihoods through participation and equal access to water*

Project strategy and expected results

The project *Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water* aims at securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children through efficient on-farm use of water and equitable community governance of water resources. The project strategy is to fairly, transparently and sustainably allocate scarce water resources at community level to enhance intra-community partnerships, community resilience and create opportunities for establishment of livelihoods that in the context of challenges increasingly associated with labour migration, present a credible alternative to such migration.

The **theory of change** of the project is: *if* excluded sectors of the rural population in particular women and girls are empowered to productively use limited on-farm water resources for starting to build livelihoods in an environment where communities appreciate inclusion and water conservation, *then* they will be healthier and more prosperous. The increased knowledge and economic opportunities will lead to increased participation of target groups in water management activities which will ultimately enhance the local power relationships in favour of the presently excluded, *resulting* in enhanced access to water resources to secure sustainable livelihoods.

The expected **outcomes** of the project are formulated as follows:

Outcome 1: People in target communities have started adopting measures for equitable and efficient water use in their households/gardens. It is expected that raising awareness of the secondary schools' students, equipping them with practical skills of efficient agricultural production, and engaging them in advocacy campaigns, aimed at general public, religious and political leaders, municipal workers, members of the local councils and other decision makers in the communities, will have a multiplier effect on the communities as a whole. Simple tips related to efficient water use, water safety and sustainable agricultural practices will be communicated through various advocacy initiatives of the students. Students will have demonstrated application of sustainable agricultural production in their kitchen gardens and school demonstration plots in practice. As a result, it is expected that 70 percent of the survey respondents in target villages will confirm to have adopted one or more of the sanitary and efficient water use measures recommended through advocacy actions - **Indicator 1**.

Output 1.1: Secondary school students in selected areas have demonstrated safer and more efficient agricultural practice in their communities. This output will be measured through the following indicators.

Indicator 1.1a: As a result of enrolling in the '*My Prosperous Farm*' course 1,000 secondary school students in 10 partner schools of the selected villages will have improved their knowledge and understanding of the agricultural production based on the productive, efficient and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as basics of marketing and business planning. Teachers of the course will conduct regular tests to determine whether the learning outcomes for the specific period of time have been achieved and flag any issues to address for the next trimester. Further, the need for equal access to water as well as issues of clean water and sanitation will be addressed.

Further, **Indicator 1.1b** will measure if no less than 500 of these students have applied the practical knowledge on their kitchen garden plots of 0.01 ha by growing profitable crops, using simple environmentally friendly agro-technology and with extension support throughout the vegetation period provided by RAS. Data for this indicator will be collected through regular site visits of the extension specialist to students' plots and school demonstration plots. Students will keep diaries recording implementation of the recommended agro-technology. Regular site visits will ensure regular extension support at critical points of vegetation period, document progress of the students, and flag issues in a timely manner. Site visit reports and student dairies will provide disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data on the results achieved by each student.

Indicator 1.1c is intended to measure effectiveness of the recommended sustainable agro-technology. It is expected that the students will have received yields, which are at least 20 percent higher than the average yields in the given area, and have participated in the market and received income from sale of their produce. The data will be collected from the extension specialists' site visit reports and student diaries.

Output 1.2: Students have acquired advocacy and communication for change skills to influence attitude change in their communities in favour of more equitable and efficient use of natural resources will be achieved through integration of the '*My Safe and Peaceful School*' component into the curriculum of the selected schools. As part of this course the students will be supported to carry out a number of advocacy and communication for change activities covering the wider population of their communities to raise awareness of the general public about the sustainable use of natural resources, communicate importance of equal access and equitable use for resources by all population groups, as well as simple easy-to-use tips on how to improve water and land use in daily life in their households and gardens. Students showing superior aptitude will be involved in a multitude of activities conducted by UN Women beyond and outside the scope of this project to further consolidate their skills on influencing attitudes.

Indicator 1.2 is put forth to measure the number of people reached by the various advocacy actions of the students. It is expected to cover no less than 30,000 people in all target communities. The data on the reach-out will be collected from student reports supported with evidence (photos, print run, etc.).

Outcome 2: Capacitated local self-government and Water Users Associations in target areas provide equal access to resources and enhanced services to the population. Local self-governments in the selected municipalities will be offered to be trained on the use of the database management system '*Berkut*', which will automatize the most popular functions of municipal staff, such as preparation of certificates, disaggregated reports and compilation of statistical analysis for the reporting purposes on the basis of household information. This however requires intensive work of inputting household data from paper-based documents into the database. Simultaneously the social worker of the municipality will carry out social passportization, review the household data of the existing recipients of state allowances to evaluate their eligibility and carry out household surveys to identify new families eligible for the allowances but not receiving them currently. Both exercises will require intensive work during the first 4-6 months and will serve as a commitment test and pre-requisite for further interventions in the municipality. *'Berkut'* will be updated with a module on social passportization and Water Users Association. The latter will derive data from the general database of household data and is intended to create a comprehensive list of users in order to ensure all eligible are included in water users lists, and fee collection is systematized and transparent. The project will advocate for a system where water fees ensure full cost recovery with exceptions for those unable to pay, as per the law. However, as the project focusses in enabling the vulnerable to enhance livelihoods through the effective use of water, everyone in time should be able to pay for water use based on the additional income generated by such use of water. A graduated scheme, whereby the first small quantity of water is either free or subsidized with these subsidies recovered from heavy water users (who either derive a high profit from this use or are using water inefficiently and as such to the disadvantage of the community) will be advocated where legally possible. On such matters, the role of the project will be to try to build consensus between all local stakeholders. Further, the project will facilitate the establishment of feedback mechanisms on the performance of the WUA. Households in the catchment area and WUA clients will be interviewed to assess WUA performance and level of participation and inclusiveness. While the project will oversee this process, it will facilitate the local self-government and the WUA to conduct such assessments in the longer term. Findings will be collated, analysed and reported back to both the local *kenesh* as well as informal institutes such as the *Kurultai*, the local people's assembly. Data will be disaggregated according to gender and other site-specific factors of interest.

'Berkut' is a stand-alone computer-based MIS system that can be programmed to allow for online data exchange. Given unreliable and slow internet access in villages in Kyrgyzstan, data put on USB sticks can also be aggregated by offline uploading centrally. *'Berkut'* is to be fully integrated into the local self-government administration where access to data is given on a need-to-know basis ensuring data security and privacy. The WUA module is maintained by local WUA staff, drawing on base data which specifies households in the WUA catchment area. Data can then be uploaded to the local self-government administration *'Berkut'* database for monitoring of compliance with legal provisions such as those relating to equal access to the public good water. Select data, such as that of water users having fully met water payments and thus being entitled to water can be posted in the local administration for public access. Other data is kept confidential, and WUA will only have access to data they have a right to as per the law.

Use of *'Berkut'* in a municipality is a prerequisite for participation of this community in the second component. Municipalities and communities failing to realize their formal commitment made prior to the project commencing in a community can still participate in MPF related activities of the first component described above but will not be eligible for investment and grants under the second component.

As a result it is expected that the level of satisfaction of the population with service delivery relating to water management increases. Achievement of this outcome will be measured through the following two indicators:

Indicator 2a: Percentage of people satisfied with the services of LSG in relation to ensuring equal access to water resources. It is expected that the level of satisfaction will increase by 50 percent over baseline. The survey of a sample group of respondents will be carried out at the municipal administration exit at the start and the end of the project.

Indicator 2b: Percentage increase in the number of newly identified water users by WUAs (covering potentially excluded groups, such as female headed households, disabled people, etc.). The number of newly identified water users is expected to increase the number of users by at least 10 percent over baseline at the end of the project. The number of users before project intervention will be recorded during start-up stage from the official records of the WUAs.

Output 2.1: Local self-governments have started using electronic database management information system *'Berkut'* with updated list of people eligible for social allowances. Introduction of *'Berkut'* will improve the quality of service provision of the partner local self-governments, one of which is better targeting of the state allowances to the most vulnerable. This is required by the Law of KR On social passportization and in line with the established methodology and instructions of the Ministry of social development of KR. Local self-government's relevant officials will be trained on the use of *'Berkut'* and the methodology of social passportization and backstopped on a regular basis in the process to address the challenges which may be faced. As a result it is envisaged that the number of newly identified people eligible for state allowances will reach at least 15 percent of the total number of the initial number of recipients - **Indicator 2.1**. The relevant disaggregated data will be retrieved from the official list of the recipients of state allowances from the municipal records or local Social fund offices. *'Berkut'* has been in use since 2005. It has been used by interested LSG. Use has been welcome by the state but not mandated. GTZ, EU and USAID have all implemented projects where *'Berkut'* has been pursued by LSG participating in these projects. The Secretary of the LSG administration as well as the Social Worker are the primary beneficiaries of *'Berkut'* in that they save much time in conducting their work using *'Berkut'*. Therefore, it is them who first upload information on households from the paper based *Khos Kniga* that currently records such information. Data entry is very simple and conducted in Kyrgyz, with an explanatory menu on the ACCESS database in both Kyrgyz and Russian.

Output 2.2: WUAs have increased water fee collection as a result of improved user accounting and billing incorporated into *'Berkut'*. The database management system *'Berkut'* is intended to serve as a tool to improve the quality of user lists, which is a pre-requisite for transparent and equitable allocation of water resources. The potentially excluded population groups, such as female headed households, disabled, and others will be included into the overall database platform from the household records of the municipality, from which the WUA module derives the data. Improved lists of users will also result in a more transparent billing and fee collection. It is envisaged that water fee collection will improve by at least 10 percent over baseline - **Indicator 2.2**. Data for this indicator can be reliably collected from the accounting records of the WUA on a regular basis and progress tracked throughout project duration.

Project beneficiaries and stakeholders

The target groups of the project are:
- Those deemed vulnerable *(muktash)* according to social passportisation data
  Note: given the nature of activities it is likely that a larger proportion of beneficiaries will be women rather than men. However, there is equal access to anyone meeting criteria
- Persons with disabilities
- Interested girls and boys enrolled in the 9th through 11th grade of local secondary schools, their teachers and parents
- Single-headed households
- Key functionaries of local self-government
- Water Users' Association

Government counterparts in the project are the Gender Unit at Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration and various district administrations and municipalities involved in the project. Responsible party is the Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad (RAS JA).

Budget and geographical scope and timeframe

The project is implemented in 3 provinces, 5 districts and 7 municipalities of the Kyrgyz Republic[18] selected based on analysis of the following criteria:
- Agro-ecological suitability
- Current status and predictable change of seasonal water resource availability
- Commitment to assume ownership, including financial contribution at local self-government, community and target group/beneficiary level
- Readiness of Social Worker to carry out functions as relates to social passportisation
- Local WUA confirming equal access to water resources in their charter for anyone in their catchment area
- Established willingness of the community to practice minimum standards of sanitation, or, in case these are not presently practiced assessed interest in amending behaviour based on being taught practicable and realistic methods as taught in the *My Prosperous Farm* (MPF) course and subsequently advocated at community level by participating student

Total project budget is 900'000 Euro comprising of 890'000 Euro funding from the Government of Finland and UN Women contribution of 10,000 Euro for the period of 30 months (01.10.2015-31.03.2018).

Project management

The project is managed by UN Women who as the executive agency bears the responsibility for the overall project outcome. The responsible party is jointly responsible with UN Women for the achievement of the outputs. The day-to-day implementation of the project is managed by a project manager with the support of the project team within UN Women and the responsible party. Oversight and strategic steering is provided by the Coordination Council with representatives from the government counterparts, local NGOs, UN Women, the Donor and the responsible party.

III. Purpose (and use of the evaluation)

As indicated in Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan of the Strategic Note 2018-2022 of the UN Women Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic, a final evaluation with a special focus on lessons learnt will be conducted towards the end of implementation period of the project *Livelihoods through participation and equal access to water*. The main purpose of this

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[18] **Provinces**: Chui, Batken, Osh **Districts**: Sokuluk, Kadam-Jai, Leilek, Aravan, Nookat, Uzgen
    Municipalities: Asyl-Bash, Halmion, Uch-Korgon, Kulundu, Naiman, Check-Abad, Don-Bulak

final evaluation is to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the CO approaches to women, peace and security, organizational learning and accountability, and to inform the overall implementation of the Strategic Note of the UN Women Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022. The information generated by the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to sustain peace and conflict-prevention with a particular focus on engaging adolescents and women in dialogues on gender equality, human rights, and peace and security at local, national and regional levels.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the UN Women staff at the Kyrgyzstan Country Office, the responsible party and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Kyrgyzstan and the ECA region and the project beneficiaries.

IV. Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Analyse the relevance of the project strategy and approach at local and national levels on gender equality and women's empowerment, peacebuilding agenda, and adaptation to climate change.
- Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project results, including the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the intervention.
- Assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in advancing gender equality through the target group.
- Analyze how human rights based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the project implementation.
- Asses how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of UN Women in the frameworks of Women, Peace and Security agenda and beyond.
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices.
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's work on women, peace and security in Kyrgyzstan, youth, peacebuilding and beyond.

Key evaluation questions

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women's rights and gender equality principles, these dimensions will have a special attention in this evaluation and will be considered under each evaluation criterion.

Relevance

- To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? How appropriate was the chosen focus on vulnerable groups in addressing the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies, and specifically National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality till

2020, its National Action Plans, National priorities in climate change adaptation, National Strategy on Sustainable Development, and other key national strategies and programmes in the area of advancing gender equality and water governance?
- To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?
- To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities in participation and equal access to water?
- To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of water governance?
- What is UN Women's current comparative advantage in this area of work compared with other UN entities and key partners in the Kyrgyz Republic?

Effectiveness
- To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?
- What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
- How appropriate is the project strategy of empowering and engaging youth and local self-governments as advocates for gender equality and human rights making a contribution to community level stability through inclusion?
- How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?
- To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision making?

Efficiency
- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
- To what extent does the management structure of the intervention support efficiency for programme implementation and achievement of results?
- Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?

Sustainability
- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
- How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
- To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and water governance?

- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women's rights and gender equality principles into evaluation, these dimensions will require special attention for this evaluation and will be considered under each evaluation criterion.

It is expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions (and refine them as needed), the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. Final evaluation matrix will be approved in the evaluation inception report.

V. Scope of the evaluation

The final evaluation of the project *Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water* will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the entire duration of the project 01-10-2015-31.03.2018. The evaluation is scheduled between January and April 2018.

The evaluation includes a data collection mission in Bishkek and three selected project sites in Kyrgyzstan, covering both its southern and northern parts.

The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the project, and broadly allocate resources (time) in relation to the relative expenditure between the various project components.

The *Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water* project has been included in the Country Programme Evaluation conducted in 2017 as part of the project portfolio of UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan. Some of the approaches and strategies employed in the project have been implemented within the previous PBF-funded *Building the Constituency for Peace* and EU-funded *Promoting Gender Justice and Empowerment of Young Women* projects. These evaluation and lessons learnt reports with findings and recommendations will be made available to the evaluation team to inform the evaluation design, methodologies, and final evaluation report.

VI. Evaluation design (process and methods)

Methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant UN Women stakeholders and partners in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles and adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines[19].

The evaluation is a final programme evaluation and both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow a ToC approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation

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[19] Please see section XI References below

- Online consultations and discussions with UN Women Country Office senior management, programme and project staff
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, government partners, donor and other stakeholders
- Field visits to and observation at selected project sites

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The proposed approach and methodology has to be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements, and the evaluators will have an opportunity to make their inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. The methodology and approach should, however, incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives. It is expected that the Evaluation Team will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report.

Comments provided by the evaluation reference and management groups are aimed at methodological rigor, factual errors, errors of interpretation, or omission of information and must be considered by the evaluators to ensure a high-quality product. The final evaluation report should reflect the evaluator's consideration of the comments and acknowledge any substantive disagreements.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process has five phases:

1) Preparation: gathering and analysing programme data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations on the approach, preparing the TOR, establishment of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), stakeholders mapping and selection of evaluation team.

2) Inception: consultations between the evaluation team and the EMG, programme portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the ERG, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation and validation of inception report.

3) Data collection and analysis: in depth desk research, in-depth review of the project documents and monitoring frameworks, in online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.

4) Analysis and synthesis stage: analysis of data and interpretation of findings, and drafting and validation of an evaluation report and other communication products.

5) Dissemination and follow-up: once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response, publishing of the evaluation report, uploading the published report on the GATE website, and the dissemination of evaluation findings.

UN Women is entirely responsible for phases 1 and 5 outlined above which will not foresee the involvement of the independent evaluation team.

VII. Stakeholder participation and evaluation management

The UN Women Kyrgyzstan Programme Manager of Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment will serve as the evaluation task manager responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation and ensures that the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy, United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations system and other key guidance documents. Moreover, an evaluation management group comprising of UN Women senior management and key programme staff will be established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions and quality assure the different deliverables.

The establishment of an evaluation reference group facilitates participation of the key stakeholders in the evaluation process and will help to ensure that the evaluation approach is robust and relevant to staff and stakeholders. Furthermore, it will make certain that factual errors or errors of omission or interpretation are identified in evaluation products. The reference group will provide input and relevant information at key stages of the evaluation: terms of reference, inception report, draft and final reports and dissemination of the results.

VIII. Timeframe and expected outputs[20]

Task	Tentative Timeframe	Estimated # of Working Days
Inception phase	**May 2018**	
1. Desk review of background documentation	30 Apr - 5 May 2018	2
2. Inception meetings with the CO and ERG	7-9 May 2018	1
Inception report (including two rounds of revision)	21 May 2018	4
Data collection phase	**End of May 2018**	
3. Documents review, interviews	22-26 May 2018	2
4. Visit to project sites	27 May-2 Jun 2018	5
Analysis and reporting phase	**June 2018**	
5. Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	3 - 6 Jun 2018	3
6. Draft report (including two rounds of revision)	13 Jun and 20 Jun 2018	9
7. Final report Evaluation communication products (brief PPT, two-pager)	28 Jun 2018	2

Expected deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver:

- **An inception report**: The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the evaluation reference group for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.
- **Presentation of preliminary findings:** A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the evaluation management

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[20] Since this evaluation will be conducted by an international and a national evaluator the distribution of the days amongst them are indicative and based on preliminar distribution of responsibilities.

group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference group for comments and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft inception report.

- **A draft evaluation report**: A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate evaluation management group feedback and will be shared with the evaluation reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts.
- **The final evaluation report:** The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.
- **Evaluation communication products:** Presentation of the preliminary findings at the closing event of the project in May 2018 (date TBD), a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Russian.

Payment will be issued in three instalments upon the satisfactory submission of the deliverables cleared by the evaluation task manager to certify that the services have been satisfactorily performed: 15% upon the signing of the contract, 40% upon approval of evaluation inception report and submission of the draft report, 45% upon the validation of the final evaluation report and communication products.

IX. Evaluation team composition and requirements

An evaluation team consisting of an international team leader and a national team member will conduct the evaluation. Both have some experience of each of the following: conducting evaluations, gender equality, youth, and natural resources management. The team leader is responsible for coordination during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation task manager and the evaluation management group. The team member will provide support to the team leader in all the aspects of conducting the evaluation, including translation and interpretation where necessary.

In further detail, the duties and responsibilities of the Team Leader are as follows:

- Leading the inception phase and developing an inception report outlining design, approach and methodology of the evaluation and an indicative workplan of the evaluation team within the framework of this ToR.
- Directing and supervising the team member in carrying out collection, research and analysis of relevant documentation and other data, and reporting.
- Overseeing and assuring quality of data collection and leading the analysis of the evaluation evidence.
- Preparing for meetings with the evaluation management group, evaluation reference group and other stakeholders to review findings, conclusions and recommendations.

- Leading the preparation of the evaluation communication products.

Required skills and expertise of the Team Leader
- A master's degree or its equivalent in one or more of the following: economics, social sciences, development studies, water management, gender or youth studies
- Relevant experience of conducting evaluation over at least five years in the area of gender equality and women empowerment; or natural resource management; or community level development intervention, this including substantive involvement in at least three evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes/projects
- Knowledge and experience of gender-responsive and human rights based approaches to evaluation
- Experience of designing and leading/participating in gender-responsive evaluations and/or applied research utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods
- Ability to produce well written reports
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Experience within the United Nations system will be considered an asset
- Proficiency in English
- Knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz is an asset.

Required skills and expertise of the team member
- A master's degree or its equivalent in economics, social sciences, international relations, peace and conflict studies, gender or youth studies or related area
- Minimum 5 years of professional experience on issues of inclusive and sustainable development including knowledge on GEEW issues with substantive involvement in several evaluation processes

- Experience/ knowledge of youth, interventions in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment and management of natural resources at the country level
- Demonstrated analytical and presentation skills and ability to collect data and structure information
- Previous knowledge of the UN system will be an asset
- Excellent knowledge of English and Russian, working knowledge of Kyrgyz. Knowledge of Uzbek or Tajik will be considered an asset

X. Application procedure
Applications should include
- Offeror's letter to UN Women confirming interest and availability for the assignment, including financial proposal, indicating a total lump sum to include all costs relating to the delivery of outputs as per above description
- P11 form including past experience in similar assignments. This form can be downloaded at www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment
- Copies of previous evaluation reports submitted separately by email to hr.kyrgyzstan@unwomen.org

All online application must include (as an attachment) the completed UN Women, UNDP or UN Personal History form (P11) in English accessible via the following link: www.unwomen.org/about-us/employment. Kindly note that the system will only allow one attachment, which must be the P11. **Please upload the P11 form combined with other application documents, including the financial proposal and a possible CV, as one (1) single PDF document. Copies of the previous evaluation reports should be sent to: hr.kyrgyzstan@unwomen.org.**

Please carefully respond to the requirements of the Terms of Reference in the P11 that you submit.

Please note that the financial proposal should all-inclusive and take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant during the contract period itemizing the following: fee rate per working day, daily subsistence allowance rate for every day in field for the purposes of the assignment, necessary local travel expenses by the most appropriate means of transportation and the most direct economy class practicable route and any other relevant expenses required for the purposes of the assignment. The financial proposal should be provided in USD; if the proposal is provided in any other currency it would be converted as per UN exchange rate on the date of post closure.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Candidates can only be shortlisted if they profess to meet all the mandatory requirements in the Terms of Reference. Applications without the completed P11 form are incomplete and will NOT be considered for further assessment.

The Consultant shall promote a client-oriented approach consistent with UN Women rules and regulations and commits to high standards of quality, productivity and timeliness in the delivery of tasks. The Consultant will meet and apply the highest standards of integrity and impartiality.

The Consultant must be fully dedicated to the mandate and the values of UN Women, particularly to promoting Gender Equality as a strategy to reduce conflict, improve livelihoods and ensure fairness and justice; to Women Empowerment underpinning Gender Equality promotion efforts; to inter-ethnic tolerance and concord; and to respect for diversity.

Evaluation of applicants

Candidates will be evaluated using a cumulative analysis method taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' technical qualifications and experience, and their Financial Proposal. Candidates meeting the mandatory requirements in the Terms of Reference as per the P11 submitted will be longlisted and passed on for further technical evaluation. The technical evaluation of the longlisted candidates comprises a desk review of the submitted documents, including the mandatory P-11, and an interview for candidates clearing the threshold in the desk review. Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (28 points of 40) in the desk review, which accounts for 40% of total assessment marks, will be shortlisted and invited for an interview. Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (49 points of 70) from the aggregated marks for desk review and the interview will be further considered for financial evaluation. The interview thus accounts for 30% of total marks, and the Financial Proposal for 30% also.

The contract will thus be awarded to the individual consultant whose application documents including the Financial Proposal, and performance in an interview have been evaluated and determined as:

- Technically responsive/compliant/acceptable to the requirements of the ToR and
- Having received the highest cumulative (technical evaluation and interview, and financial evaluation) score against the below defined criteria.

Applications without the documents indicated as required are incomplete and will NOT be considered for further assessment. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Technical Criteria for Team Leader - 70% of total evaluation - max. 70 points

Criteria	Mandatory requirement used for longlisting	
At master's degree or its equivalent in one or more of the following: economics, social sciences, development studies, water management, gender or youth studies	X	Yes/No
Relevant experience of conducting evaluation over at least five years in the area of gender equality and women empowerment; or natural resource management; or community level development intervention, this including substantive involvement in at least three evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes/projects	X	Yes/No
Proficiency in English	X	Yes/No

Technical evaluation	Points in desk review 40	Points in interview 30
Knowledge and experience of gender-responsive and human rights based approaches to evaluation		Up to 10
Experience of designing and leading/participating in gender-responsive evaluations and/or applied research utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods	Up to 10	Up to 10
Ability to produce well written reports	Up to 20	
Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders		Up to 10
Experience within the United Nations system will be considered an asset	Up to 5	
Knowledge of Russian or Kyrgyz will be considered an asset	Up to 5	

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation - max. 30 points
The maximum number of points assigned to the Financial Proposal is allocated to the lowest price proposal. All other price proposals receive points in inverse proportion.
A suggested formula is as follows: p 30 (μ/z)
Where:

    p - points for the financial proposal being evaluated

µ - price of the lowest priced proposal

z - price of the proposal being evaluated

XI References

Evaluation Policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW/2012/8):

www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2012/12&Lang=E

How to Manage Gender Responsive Evaluation. Evaluation Handbook:

www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS):

www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/evaluation/evaluation-geraasmethodology-en.pdf

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/22

Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

Annex B – Evaluation Matrix

Category	Ref	Research Questions	Evaluation Strategy and Research Tools (MOV)	Findings and Observations
Relevance	A1	To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? How appropriate was the chosen focus on vulnerable groups in addressing the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?	KII national counterparts and CSO; FGD beneficiaries	
	A2	To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national development strategies, and specifically National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality till 2020, its National Action Plans, National priorities in climate change adaptation, National Strategy on Sustainable Development, and other key national strategies and programmes in the area of advancing gender equality and water governance?	Desk review and analysis, specifically Sustainable Development Strategy, the Gender Equality Strategy and action plans including the NAP 1325.	
	A3	To what extent has gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the programme design and implementation?	Desk review and analysis	

Category	Ref	Research Questions	Evaluation Strategy and Research Tools (MOV)	Findings and Observations
	A4	To what extent has the project been catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of inequalities in participation and equal access to water?	KII stakeholder inquiry into root causes of inequalities; FGD with beneficiaries on root causes and project impact	
	A5	To what extent is the intervention aligned with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of water governance?	Desk review and analysis against CEDAW, SDGs, etc.	
	A6	What is UN Women's current comparative advantage in this area of work compared with other UN entities and key partners in the Kyrgyz Republic?	KII stakeholders – UN Women, national counterparts	
	A7	To what extent has the project contributed to the UN Women Country Office Strategic Note and current programming priorities?	Secondary data, KII stakeholders	

Category	Ref	Research Questions	Evaluation Strategy and Research Tools (MOV)	Findings and Observations
Effectiveness	B1	To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both outcome and output levels?	Desk review of project reports and indicator tracking	
	B2	What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? Has project achieved any unforeseen results,	Desk review, KII stakeholders, FGD beneficiaries including WUA	

		either positive or negative? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?		
	B3	How appropriate is the project strategy of empowering and engaging youth and local self- governments as advocates for gender equality and human rights making a contribution to community level stability through inclusion?	KII LSG; FGD beneficiaries (youth and community members)	
	B4	How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of rights-holders, duty-bearers, as well as the project partners?	KII project partners; FGD beneficiaries	
	B5	To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms in place effective for measuring and informing management of project performance and progress towards targets? To what extent was the monitoring data objectively used for management action and decision-making?	Desk review project reports and documentation; KII stakeholders (UN Women, Coordination Council)	

Efficiency	C1	Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?	Desk review and analysis	
	C2	To what extent does the management structure of the intervention support efficiency for programme implementation and achievement	Desk review; KII stakeholders (UN Women, Coordination Council)	

		of results?		
	C3	Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?	Desk review and analysis	

Sustainability	D1	What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?	KII stakeholders; FGD beneficiaries	
	D2	How effectively has the project generated national ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?	KII stakeholders (UN Women, National Government, LSG)	
	D3	To what extent the intervention succeeded in building individual and institutional capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers to ensure sustainability of benefits and more inclusive practices to local development and water governance?	KII LSG, WUA	
	D4	To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?	KII stakeholders (UN Women, Donor, National Government, CSO)	
	D5	To what extent has the exit strategy been well planned and successfully implemented?	Desk review; KII stakeholders	

Annex C – Persons Consulted

Bishkek, KR (10 including 7 women)
Gerald Gunther, UN Women Representative
Anara Aitkurmanova, Project Coordinator, UN Women
Tatiana Prokhorova, International Program Specialist, UN Women (skype)
Olivia Gruzdova, Program Assistant, FINWATERWEII
Roza Bekmatova, Head of Gender Policy Unit, Ministry of Labor and Social Development
Abakir Koilubaev, Deputy Gender al Direction, Department for Water and Melioration of the
Ministry of Agriculture, Processing Industry and Melioration
Gulshan Abdyladaeva, Chief Specialist, Department of School and Extra-Curricular
Education of the Ministry of Education and Science
Meerim Azimjanova, Project Coordinator, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad
Mavlyan Mamatkulov, Director, NGO Sputnik, Kyzyl Kiya, Batken
Tea Tornroos, Manager, Finnish Environment Institute, SYKE

Osh, KR (2 women)
Gulmaiaram Attakurova, Gender Expert, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad
Dildora Khamidova, UN Women Osh

Asyl-Bash Municipality, Chuy Province (41 including 36 women)
Zhalyn Zhumabekov, Head of LSG,
Gulmira Cholponkulova Responsible Secretary
Fatima Momunova, Social Worker
Siren Muratalieva, Prinicipal of Birimkul School
Anarkul Karymhsakova, Teacher, Birimkul School
Gulbakyt Maltaeva, Teacher Birimkul School
Jyparkul Musabaeva, Principal of Beishenaly School
Erkaiym Umetalieva, Teacher, Beishenaly School
Burmakan Kachkynova, RAS JA Consultant
Jiide Terekbaeva, Representative from vulnerable household
Janankhan Omurbekova, Representative from vulnerable household
Jypar Moldoyarov, Representative from vulnerable household
Bayel Tuibaev, MPF Student Leader, Beishenaly School
11 Members of Self-Help Groups (vulnerable women)
17 Students from Beishenaly and Birimkul School

Halmion Municipality, Batken Province(58 including 41 wome)
Kamaldin Begmatov, Head of LSG
Oktomkhan Sarybekova, Responsible Secretary
Dadaev Muktar, Deputy Head, LSG
Meerim Ashirbaeva, Social Worker
Nadyrbek Kachkynbaev, Consultant, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad
Altynbek Mamdaly uulu, Consultant, developer of E-governance system
Meerim Azimjanova, Project Coordinator, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad
Nazirbaev Mamytbek, Consultant, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad

Toktogul school principal and teachers (5 people including 1 man)
Jooshuk-Primov and Yusupov school principals and teachers (5 women)
Duishonbek Orozbaev and WUA members (2 women and 6 men)
Members of Self-Help Groups (7 vulnerable women)
Shahodat Teshebaeva, leader of SHG and representative from vulnerable household (5 members)
Alymkan Karimova, leader of SHG and representative from vulnerable household (4 members)
16 Students from Toktogul, Jooshuk and Primov school (11 girls 5 boys)

Naiman Municipality, Osh province (40 including 37 women)
Roza Shamaeva, Head of LSG
Damira Tairova, Responsible Secretary
Nazik Baltabaeva, Social Worker
Abdylkhamid Mamamshukurov, Consultant, Rural Advisory Service Jalalabad
Members of Self-Help Groups (10 vulnerable women)
Naiman school principal and teachers (6 people including 1 man)
Topchubaeva Bazargul, leader of SHG and representative from vulnerable household (4 members)
15 Students from Naiman school (14 girls 1 boy)
Parents of subtends involved in MSPS\MPF (2 women)

Annex D – References and Resources

FinWaterWEI II. Summary of Project Results. *Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources, and enhanced ability to use water efficiently*. Donor accountability tracking.

FinWaterWEI II and UN Women. *My Prosperous Farm*. Flyer.

FinWaterWEI II and UN Women. *My Safe and Peaceful School*. Flyer.

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UN Women. 3 October 2016. Note-to-File. *Review of the target municipalities within "Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources, and enhanced ability to use water efficiently" project.* Internal project document.

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UN Women Kyrgyzstan Country Office. 2018. *UN Women Strategic Note 2018-2022: Narrative Report.*

UN Women. "Concept note to the additional activity WASH," 18.09.2017.

UN Women. Format for the UN Women's Survey on Selection of Project Sites, "Livelihood through Participation and Equal Access to Water".

UN Women. Report on Selection of Project Sites dated 14.03.2016 .

UN Women and RAS JA. Agreement on Cooperation between UN Women, RAS JA and Municipality (WUAs, schools and head of LSG) dated 16.04.2016.

UN Women. Provision on Coordination Council on the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water" project.

UN Women. ToR for Coordination Council on the "Livelihoods through Participation and Equal Access to Water".

UN Women. Minutes of meetings and handouts for Coordination Council dated 02.12.2015; 08.12.2016; 14.04.2016; 22.09.2017.

UN Women. Textbook "My Safe and Peaceful School" 2 Volumes

UN Women and RAS–JA. Textbook "My Prosperous Farm"