

# **CAUSALITY ANALYSIS OF RURAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS**

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## **2. Abbreviations**

ICARE	International Centre for Agribusiness Research and Education
FAA	Federation of Agricultural Associations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
WB	World Bank
WM	Women FAA Members
NMW	Women FAA Non-members
MM	Men FAA Members
NSS	National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UN CEDAW	UN Covenant on Elimination of Discrimination against Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

### 3. Table of Contents

1. Acknowledgements	2
2. Abbreviations	3
3. Table of Contents	4
4. Introduction	5
5. FAA and Farmer Organizations	10
5.1 Services provided by the FAA	11
5.2. Membership in the FAA	11
5.3. Decision-making	11
5.4. Gender balance within FAA	12
5.5. Gender Policies within FAA	12
5.5.1. Policy influencing	12
5.5.2. Human Resources	13
5.5.3. Financial Resources	13
5.5.4. System, Procedures and Tools	13
5.5.5. Staffing Statistics	13
6. Problem definition and research topic	13
7. Methodology	15
8. Rural Women, Gender and Poverty	17
9. International Instruments and Mechanisms Protecting Women's Rights	19
9.1 International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions	20
9.2. UN Millennium Development Goals	20
9.3. National Mechanisms and Instruments for Promotion of Women's Rights	21
10. Barriers for rural women's participation	22
11. Research findings	23
11.1. Membership in the FAA co-operatives	23
11.2. Monthly income	24
11.3. Monthly Family Income	25
11.4. Management of Mobile/Immobile Assets in the Families	26
11.5. Household management	27
12. Task distribution between women and men	28
12.1. Household Management	28
12.2. Task Distribution	28
13. Household related decision-making	29
14. Technical assistance to the farmers	30
14.1. Sources of assistance	30
15. Service provision	32
15.1. Consultancy and training	32
16. Participation of Women and Men	33
16.1. Attitudes on Participation	33
17. Women's Rights	35
17.1. Freedom to choose employment	35
18. Barriers for women's participation in the public and community life	36
19. Men's attitude to women's right to work	37
20. Equal pay for women and men	38
21. Equal rights within rural communities	38
22. Women's and Men's rights in the family	39
23. Management of agricultural production, income and land ownership rights	41
24. Application of the Right to Ownership	41
25. Awareness on Human/Women Rights: ability to address violations	42
26. Discrimination within the family	44
27. Awareness on Gender Equality, Equal Rights and Opportunities	45
28. Women's Role in development of society and country	46
29. Self esteem and Self-realization	47
29.1. Self-esteem	47
29.2. Self-realization	48
30. Skills Wanted	49
31. Demographic analysis	51
31.1. Member Women	51
31.2. Non-member women	51
32. Time Distribution among Women and Men	52
33. FAA Local Managers' Attitude to Women's Participation	52
34. Government expert on rural women's participation	53
35. Summary of Findings	54
36. Action Plan	56
37. List of Literature	59
38. Annexes	61

#### **4. Introduction**

Equal rights and opportunities to contribute to the well-being of society and equal appreciation for efforts spent on daily work is one of the key principles making life for women and men harmonious, and development processes – efficient and sustainable in transition countries.

Political and economic participation, accessible economic opportunities, political empowerment, educational attainment, health and well being are the key areas measuring real state of affairs within society, and focusing gender gap between women and men.

Countries and societies that do not capitalize on the full potential of one half of their societies are misallocating their human resources and undermining their competitive potential.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, the situation of women and men, as well as issues of their equality, equal opportunities and rights, is at stake in Armenia since there's a significant gap in their political and economic opportunities and status, characterized by women's limited access to resources and decision-making processes on different layers and areas.

Armenia was the first former Soviet Union country to dismantle its 600 huge collective farms and distribute agricultural land to individual households. More than 330,000 small-scale farms were created overnight to ensure a minimum, basic food supply and to absorb workers from now-extinct industries

According to data provided by Armenian National Statistical Service the rural population in Armenia comprises around 35, 9 % of the whole population<sup>2</sup> as per January 1, 2006. Currently, there are around 339,200 farmer households in the agricultural sector. Due to the land and water scarcity, as well as high risk of drought, early frosts, hail showers, slumps, coupled with harsh continental climate are severely restrictive factors for intensification of agribusiness and agricultural productivity, which play crucial role in the life of rural population.

Poverty in Armenia is still widespread, deep-rooted and despite recent economic growth the income gap is widening. Unemployment is especially high in the rural areas due to the severe lack of employment possibilities, lack of financial resources and physical infrastructure. Also, many factories and industries formerly functioning in the different regions and serving as one of the main sources of income for the rural population now are closed and stopped working since the beginning of 1990s.

Technology and infrastructure such as farm machinery and irrigation inherited from the pre-transition period is outdated and needs to be changed and renovated. Also, the farmer

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<sup>1</sup> Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap, UNIFEM, Augusto Lopez-Claros, World Economic Forum, Saadia Zahidi, World Economic Forum

<sup>2</sup> Third Periodic Report of the Republic of Armenia under the UN CEDAW, Article 14

households suffer from the lack of necessary agricultural tools and equipment. However, there is another huge problem they face in the current situation: a crucial lack of the information and isolation of the rural areas from Yerevan, the capital city, as well as from other regions, communities and villages of Armenia.

A relatively small proportion of people prosper, while most struggle to stay above the poverty line. About half of Armenians live in poverty and two out of ten of them are extremely poor. Despite economic reforms and quite serious economic growth observed recently, unemployment and poverty remain widespread in Armenia. Unemployment and poverty still remain on top of the agenda in Armenia as 29.8% of the population - about 960,000 people is poor and among them about 150,000 very poor.

Poverty continues to be higher in urban areas other than Yerevan city, while the capital city of Yerevan has benefited the most from economic growth. Residents of rural areas gained the least compared to Yerevan city and other urban areas.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Armenia: Poverty indicators in 2004 and 2005, percents<sup>4</sup>**

	2004					2005				
	Very Poor	Poor	Share in total population	Poverty gap	Severity of Poverty	Very Poor	Poor	Share in total population	Poverty gap	Severity of Poverty
Urban areas	7.5	36.4	62.4	8.4	2.8	5.3	30.7	63.5	5.9	1.9
Yerevan	6.1	29.2	31.8	6.5	2.2	3.6	23.9	32.6	4.0	1.2
Other urban	9.2	43.9	30.6	10.3	3.5	7.2	37.8	30.9	8.0	2.6
Rural	4.4	31.7	37.6	5.7	1.6	3.2	28.3	36.5	4.6	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>

Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

Agriculture is the country's largest labour sector, followed by services and industry. The poorest Armenians are found in rural areas with the least favorable conditions for agricultural activities.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, National Statistical Service, Chapter 3, Poverty profile 2004-2005, www.armstat.am,

<sup>4</sup> Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, National Statistical Service, www.armstat.am, pg. 16

<sup>5</sup> IFAD, Armenia Gender Profile,

**Table 1. Armenia: Poverty measures by marzes, in 2004 and 2005 (in %)<sup>6</sup>**

	2004		2005					
	Extreme poverty incidence	Poverty Incidence	Extreme poverty incidence	Poverty Incidence	Share in the poor	Share in total population	Poverty gap	Severity of poverty
<b>Yerevan</b>	6,1	29,2	3,6	23,9	26,1	32,6	4,0	<b>1,2</b>
<b>Ararat</b>	6,4	32,7	7,4	30,9	9,1	8,7	6,6	<b>2,2</b>
<b>Armavir</b>	6,6	36,0	3,8	31,6	8,4	7,9	5,2	<b>1,5</b>
<b>Vayots Dzor</b>	4,1	28,9	1,8	19,2	1,2	1,8	1,8	0,5
<b>Total</b>	6.4	34.6	4.6	29.8	100.0	100.0	5.4	1.6

Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

As per the NSS studies, poverty have been declining in the region of Vayots Dzor, Yerevan, and Armavir: in the region of Ararat the poverty growth has been observed in the years of 2004-2005.

**Table 2: Armenia: Poverty measures by gender 2004 and 2005 (in %)<sup>7</sup>**

	2004		2005			
	Very Poor	Poor	Very Poor	Poor	Share in the poor	Share in the population
<b>Gender</b>						
<b>Female</b>	6,4	34,3	4,6	29,7	53,5	<b>53,8</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>6,4</b>	<b>35,0</b>	<b>0,4</b>	<b>30,1</b>	<b>46,5</b>	<b>46,2</b>

Source: National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

According to the official data provided by NSS, there was not much difference with regard to poverty between women and men (see the Table 2). However, results of the current survey have revealed major gap between the women's and men's economic/ financial situation, their influence within their families and community, inequality in resource distribution and management, as well as numbers of representation in public and community structures dealing with farming and agriculture (such as FAA), especially their under-representation with regards to decision-making.

Inequality of rights and opportunities found within the female headed households with children states that the latter are more affected by poverty if compared to the national

<sup>6</sup> Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, National Statistical Service, www. armstat.am, pg.19

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. excerpt from pg.22

average, comprising 20 % of poor in 2005. The high share of female headed households could be explained by emigration and its patterns characterized by male migration abroad in search of better employment opportunities. High poverty among those families may be explained by a number of factors including lack of or low wage employment opportunities, sometimes inability or unwillingness of the spouse to support the family and others.<sup>8</sup>

General characteristics of the state of the rural sector are very similar to the situation in many other countries, including Central and Eastern Europe, CIS, Central Asia, etc.

One of the most typical trends one can observed in the rural areas is ***decrease in the number of population and aging of the population***. Depopulation trends are strong in mountainous and less developed bordering regions.

***Labour migration*** is the main cause for de-population of the rural areas. In the overwhelming majority of cases (78%), at least one member of the family had left the household to find work abroad.<sup>9</sup> According to the findings of recent studies, in the period of 2002-2005, 7.3 - 9.2% of the economically active population of Armenia was involved in labor migration process. The highest rates of household involvement in labor migration were recorded in the regions of Shirak and Lori, where accordingly each third and each fifth household was involved in labor migration. Average rates were observed in Kotayk, Gegharkunik, Ararat, Vayots Dzor and Yerevan, and the lowest rates in Aragatsotn, Tavush, Syunik and Armavir. Migration rate in urban locations is almost twice as high as in rural ones. At that, the highest migration rate was recorded in urban areas of Lori, Gegharkunik and Shirak, and the lowest rate in rural areas of Armavir.

***Gender disaggregated data of labour migrants*** is as follows: 85.9% of labor migrants are male, and 14.1% are female. The ratio of male labor migrants to the total male population aged 15 and above is 9.2%; whereas in case of females the same ratio is more than seven times lower (1.3%). From 2002-2005, 92,000-118,000 men and 11,300-22,300 women have left Armenia, which constitutes 10.9-14.0% of economically active men and 1.5-3.0% of economically active women.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pg.23

<sup>9</sup> Labor Migration from Armenia in 2002-2005: A Sociological Survey of Households, Summary of Findings, pg. 55

<sup>10</sup> 2001 migration Survey performed by NSS of the Republic of Armenia

**Table 2. The Main Reasons for Emigration from Armenia during 2001\*<sup>11</sup>**

Reasons	Age, years			Total	
	18-19	20-49	Over 50	Male	Female
Lack of work places	11.1	55.6	53.3	58.0	34.3
Lack of work by specialty	-	5.0	5.9	5.4	3.0
Impossibility to earn money to provide satisfactory living standards	3.3	30.1	26.3	29.6	29.1
Social, moral and psychological unstable atmosphere	-	1.0	3.3	1.1	3.0
Geopolitical unstable situation	1.1	0.6	-	0.2	3.0
Lack of perspectives of development in Armenia	33.3	5.2	4.2	3.5	20.1
Difficulties to deal with entrepreneurship	-	1.0	3.0	1.4	-
Other	51.2	1.5	4.0	0.8	7.5

Source: 2001 Migration Survey 2001, NSS RA

The main reasons for emigration are economic ones - the lack of workplaces and impossibility to earn enough money to provide satisfactory living conditions, which in other words mean low level of earnings. This was the main reason to emigrate for both males (87.6%) and females (63.4%). Young people emigrate because of the lack of perspectives of development in Armenia as well as the other reasons comprising 84.5% of motivation to emigrate.

For females of the all age groups the reason of the lack of perspectives is the third in the list of priorities to emigrate. It is connected with the more limited career opportunities for women than for men and lesser wages and salaries. The table also shows that economic growth and income increase are vital for stopping emigration processes in Armenia.<sup>12</sup>

***Lack of off farm jobs, full time farming scheme, and rare employment opportunities outside agriculture*** are another typical feature of the current situation in the rural regions of Armenia. Low quality of physical infrastructure, especially roads, communications and low access to public services, especially in the field of education, health care and development support institutions are also complementing to the slow development processes preventing rural regions from the rapid growth.

<sup>11</sup> 2001 migration Survey performed by NSS of the Republic of Armenia

<sup>12</sup> How to reverse emigration? Armen Yeghiazaryan (head of the research team), Vahram Avanesian, Nelson Shahnazaryan jointly with "Ameria" CJSC

## **5. FAA and Farmer Organizations**

Poverty eradication and development of rural regions has been recognized as a top priority among many farmer organizations, which play crucial role in mobilizing farmers and village communities. Most of the world's poor live in the rural areas: among them women represent the poorest sector of community. Millions of women around the world are disadvantaged in ways that make them vulnerable to poverty – whether defined in terms of money (income poverty) or in terms of well-being (human poverty).<sup>13</sup>

The causes of rural poverty vary from region to region, however there are common elements for poverty and its eradication is a global issue.<sup>14</sup> Farmers institutions and organizations need to operate efficiently in a market-oriented rural economy, and can be used as an effective tool for mobilization and effective co-operation assuring functioning of farmer co-operatives in the country, and assisting in marketing of products and their realization. They can also be used as a tool for strengthening and encouraging women's participation and assuring their involvement in community decision-making as equal members of society, whose input plays a crucial role in development and productivity of agribusiness.

Federation of Agricultural Associations (FAA) is an organization representing interests of farmers at local and international arenas, as well as responsible for management and decision-making concerning agribusiness development, land cultivation and realization of harvest within FAA farmer co-operatives on Armenian market.

Federation of Agricultural Associations was founded on December 29, 2001 to support the development of farmers' organizations and assist them in solving their common legal, managerial, technical and social problems. Currently, the Federation has 14 member-farmers' associations covering around **640** member farmers from 4 regions of Armenia – Ararart, Armavir, Vayots Dzor and Yerevan. FAA is called to protect the rights of farmers and voice their concerns and interests at national and international level.

The FAA entails the following objectives:

- Coordination of activities of its member agricultural associations,

**The majority of the 1.5 billion people living on 1 dollar a day or less are women. In addition, the gap between women and men caught in the cycle of poverty has continued to widen in the past decade, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "the feminization of poverty". Worldwide, women earn on average slightly more than 50 % of what men earn.**

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13 En route to equality, A Gender Review of National MDG Reports 2005, Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP

14 IFAP Millennium Survey on Actions to Reduce Rural Poverty and the Role of Farmers' Organizations, <http://www.ifap.org/develop/surveygen.html>

- Establishment of a centralized system of data collection, analysis, consulting, management, and training implementation,
- Provision of legal services, financing and investment,
- Supply inputs and equipment for agricultural production, and final product marketing to make its members' activities efficient,
- Contribute to the involvement of new technologies and innovations in agriculture into the local community level,
- Express interests of its members and to protect their rights when dealing with other organizations, including judicial bodies and local government institutions.

### **5.1. Services provided by the FAA**

The FAA provides different types of agricultural services, which can be divided according to their nature.

- ***Agro-technical services:*** The member FOs of FAA are implementing tillage, haymaking, stubble breaking, ripping and other agro-mechanical services.
- ***Supply services:*** The members of FOs receive timely fertilizers of good quality, chemicals, seeds, and other inputs needed for agro processing through the centralized supply services.
- ***Marketing services:*** The member FOs of FAA organizes its members' products sale upon request.
- ***Finance-loan services:*** The member FOs of FAA provide loans with low interest rate to its members for purchasing agricultural inputs necessary for the farm work.
- ***Consulting and training services:*** The member FOs of FAA present the subjects, on which they need consultations and trainings, based on their members' request.

Revealing of the causes keeping rural women out of the FAA will help to ease their ***access to the services and resources*** provided by the FAA thus creating more favorable conditions for their active participation in decision-making and enhancement of their capacities

### **5.2. Membership in the FAA**

Membership is open to any representative of the village community. The members pay around AMD 300 (around \$0.9) monthly as a membership fee. The fee can, however, be increased up to AMD 500 as per individual decision of each of the farmer co-operative. The membership fee is equally applied for women and men members.

### **5.3. Decision-making**

The main decision –making bodies within FAA are managers at the FAA co-operatives on the local level that are united within the FAA General Assembly, as well as FO members of cooperatives. Decision-making takes place based on the following principle: one member-

one vote. As to organizational culture the decision making processes are decentralized which gives opportunities to FAA members to participate in such processes.

#### **5.4. Gender balance within FAA**

From 640 FAA members only 98 are women, and from 14 FAA co-operative managers only 1 is a woman. It comprises less than 15.3 % of the whole membership. Inequality of women’s representation is also obvious in the managerial structure of the FAA – there is only 1 woman in the FAA management board.

Below is the Gender structure of the FAA as per data of 2007.

#### **The Gender Balance of the FAA Membership in 2007**

Association	Total number of members	Man	Woman
Aralez	50	49	1
Arevabuyr	28	27	1
Bambakashat	45	44	1
Himnakar	46	44	2
Hovtashat	59	50	9
Janfida	63	54	9
Khachi Tak	40	34	6
Khachik	70	58	12
Lukashin	42	40	2
Nairi	50	37	13
Nizami	31	22	9
Arevik	46	37	9
Aygegorts	70	46	24
Total	640	542	98

Source: Federation of Agricultural Associations

#### **5.5. Gender Policies within FAA**

There is no gender policy (policy document) within FAA framework and consequently no context-specific gender analytical information and sex disaggregated data gathered. There is only some data on the elementary level on female/male representation within FAA.

##### **5.5.1. Policy influencing**

No specific actions or initiatives are being undertaken by the FAA senior management staff targeting *women’s participation encouragement, strengthening and/or popularization*.

The general attitude to gender equality is positive though no efficient steps are directed to awareness-raising.

### **5.5.2. Human Resources**

In regard to focal staff there is no designated gender unit/staff. As a result no one takes the responsibility for gender equality issues, trainings, knowledge and skills and accordingly sensitivity to gender issues is not included in FAA job descriptions.

### **5.5.3. Financial Resources**

Taking into consideration the absence of gender equality initiatives “on the ground” and staff capacity-building and funding for such activities, fund raising measures are to be taken for the realization of the afore-mentioned activities.

### **5.5.4. System, Procedures and Tools**

The lack of attention to gender issues included in routine systems and procedures (information systems; appraisal, planning and monitoring procedures) leads to the absence of guidelines, information tools on gender mainstreaming within FAA, its staff and structures, i.e. farmer cooperatives.

### **5.5.5. Staffing Statistics**

FAA staff consists of fourteen managers out of which there is only a single woman. No special measures like transport arrangements, flexible working hours, childcare services, for women are undertaken by FAA. There is no assessment of male and female staff perception of “gender” issues at work.

## **6. Problem definition and research topic**

Low participation of women in decision-making, in particular rural women’s participation in community related decision-making has resulted in their isolation and limitation of their opportunities for growth, education, access to resources and finances putting them into the hardest possible conditions. Agriculture employs 45 % of the work force in Armenia; almost half of these workers are women. Also, women constitute 66 % of the unemployed workers in Armenia: they earn about 30 % less than their male counterparts.<sup>15</sup>

One third of the Armenian population lives in rural areas; about half of these rural inhabitants are women, and the issue of their inclusion in societal decision-making, creation of enabling environment for their participation, growth, access to goods, services and resources is one of the vital preconditions for fighting rural poverty in Armenia.

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<sup>15</sup> IFAD, Armenia Gender Profile, [www.ifad.org/english/gender/cen/profiles/arm.htm](http://www.ifad.org/english/gender/cen/profiles/arm.htm)

Inequalities are embedded both in the current situation that people found themselves in the rural areas, and from the disadvantages coming from the stereotypical attitudes with regards to the role and status of Armenian rural women.

As mentioned before, inequality of women's and men's representation both on decision-making and participatory levels is present within the FAA and its Farmer member co-operatives.

Participation of rural women in the FAA is quite low and underrepresented. To clarify the causes of their low participation of women, as well as get an idea on barriers preventing them from participation in FAA activities, structures and general community decision-making, the International Centre for Agricultural Research and Education, in partnership with FAA, undertook the current causality analysis of women's participation. The study aims to outline existing gender gaps in the rural communities and determine further strategy to ensure equal participation and inclusion of rural women in local FAA structures, activities, capacity-building and decision-making.

Why is women's participation important or useful for the local rural communities and why is FAA interested to boost their participation in terms of representation and decision-making?

Firstly, half of the rural population is women: women and men have different approaches to life, different demands and expectations. Men and women play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints in responding the challenges of life. Here are some wide-spread obstacles faced by the rural women in different countries and societies:

- Laws and customs that impede women's access to property ownership, credit, productive inputs, employment, education, information, or medical care
- Customs, beliefs, and traditional attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere
- Women's workload, which imposes severe time burdens on them<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the mentioned arguments, there are also *imbalances in the daily division of labor* between men and women, in access *to education, employment, social and public services* and *productive resources* which have vital influence not only for equity, but also for economic output, productivity, food security, fertility, and child welfare of the rural families.

All the mentioned factors are not only affecting inclusion and participation of women as such; they are also tremendously influencing their families and their status within it.

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<sup>16</sup> The WB Participation Sourcebook, Practice Pointers in Enabling the Poor to Participate, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

Women's access to resources, their stability, adequate conditions of life motivate their incentives for participation in decision making which have direct influence on the well-being of the women themselves, and are interwoven with the choices and actions of their families.

Equality of gender representation in the FOs will provide them not only with opportunities to participate in the FAA activities, decision-making and raise their concerns publicly: it will enable them to mobilize their community, to create a spirit of partnership, and will provide them with access to information, services and benefits of the FAA. Their participation could potentially serve as a basis for a more flexible distribution of tasks related to the household and enlarging the room for joint responsibilities. Participation of women is not a phony factor: it brings new ideas and fresh look to the problems faced by FAA. It will not only serve as an additional human resource but also will unite and centralize the FAA structure putting it to serve both women and men, and popularizing it within the community. Women's presence will decrease polarization of women's and men's interests within community. Membership will increase women's access to resources, will allow them equally participate in their distribution, will make their concerns more actual within FAA and open up opportunities for their advancement, training/capacity building, will ease access to information and, in general, make them more visible and sound as compared with present situation.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors, which hamper participation of Armenian rural women and find the root causes for their non-participation.

## **7. Methodology**

The methodology included a variety of research techniques, such as unstructured and structured interviews, among which semi-structured interviews for member women and men, and non –member women. A special separate cycle of interviews were done with local managers of the FAA co-operatives which were designed to determine position and availability of actions undertaken by the FAA management to improve women's participation within the co-operatives. Gender-related questions were incorporated in all the questionnaires and subsequent interviews covering both men and women at the local community level.

Methodology also included participant observation and direct observation, as well as review of the national and international policies and legislation on gender equality and women's human rights instruments, national data on gender disaggregated statistics, as well as qualitative and quantitative tools of data analysis, including SPSS. Methodology of Gender sensitive analysis was taken as a basis to analyze received data from gender perspective and evaluate the current state of affairs as well as particularities and needs of women and men in the local rural communities and in connection to FAA membership and participation.

In total, 94 people were inquired, among which 35 women non-members of FAA, 33 women members and 26 men members of FAA.

The sex-disaggregated data on participants of the study looks as follows:

Women Members	Women Non - members	Men Members	FAA Local Branch Managers	Total number of Enquired Women	Total number of Enquired Men
35	33	26	14	68	26

Source: Survey Data

The respondents for the interviews were selected according to the following criteria:

1. To observe and determine the similarities and differences of the situation and status of the women members and non members of FAA, in the **first group** of women members we tried to cover most of the FAA women members, thus choosing women based on their **membership in FAA**.

2. **The second group** – the non-member women, were selected from the **same villages and farming communities** where FAA has its regional branch co-operatives. These women were selected randomly although **all of them are farmers** busy with land cultivation, harvesting, fruit and vegetable growing, similar to the women members.

3. **The third group** comprising men FAA members was selected randomly from the men of FAA in the **same villages and farming communities (Ararat, Armavir, Vayots Dzor)**, and **represent the same village/community with women** (both members and non-members).

4. **The fourth group** of FAA regional managers was selected **based on their managerial position within the FAA**, and includes only 1 women among the rest 13 FAA regional managers.

In addition to the interviews, participatory observation and direct observation proved to be an effective methodology for acquiring relevant data and information. Participatory observation was implemented through the facilitation of local FAA branches during the meetings in their regional centers.

The whole research was supplemented by feedback and interview of the RA Ministry of Agriculture Expert Ms. Anahit Jilavyan, member of the Inter-governmental working group on preparation of RA Government report under the UN convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women.



**Picture 1. General discussion with women from the village of Areni, Vayots Dzor region.**

## **8. Rural Women, Gender and Poverty**

Gender inequalities between the men and women preclude the last ones from participation effectively in decision-making processes for the development planning, both within the family and at the village level. “Even in light of heightened international awareness of gender issues, it is a disturbing reality that no country has yet managed to eliminate the gender gap. Gender is not synonymous with women, nor is it a zero-sum game implying loss for men; rather, it refers to both women and men, and to their status, relative to each other. Gender equality refers to that stage of human social development at which “the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not be determined by the fact of being born male or female,”<sup>2</sup> in other words, a stage when both men and women realize their full potential”.<sup>17</sup> Countries which omit opportunities for full empowerment of its human capital and enable equal conditions for their realization lag back on the way of their economic growth and development in a whole.

Despite economic reforms and some recent growth, unemployment and poverty remain widespread in Armenia. Approximately 34 % of the population is unemployed and 90 % live below the poverty line of US\$ 1 per day. Agriculture is the country’s largest labor sector, followed by services and industry. The poorest Armenians are found in rural areas with the

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<sup>17</sup> Women’s Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap, UNIFEM study

least favorable conditions for agricultural activities. One third of the Armenian population lives in rural areas; about half of these rural inhabitants are women. Female headed households are particularly vulnerable to falling into extreme poverty since women are left alone to shoulder the burdens of household and childcare responsibilities. Unemployment and low incomes caused the growth of male migration from the country to Russia and other countries. Another consequence of male migration has been the growth in “parallel families”, where migrant male workers establish another family in their new location. This phenomenon is increasing the number of female-headed households in Armenia and compounding their vulnerability, especially when men return home in poor health. <sup>18</sup>

It is vital to consider how poverty is a “gender issue”, but it’s also necessary to consider how gender equality (and women’s empowerment) is a poverty issue. Strategies and policies to enhance gender equality must consider poverty as a contribution to gender inequality.

In itself the notion of poverty is gendered since men and women experience poverty differently for several reasons

- men’s and women’s poverty is often caused by different overall factors;
- the results of poverty often differ for men and women;
- men and women often adopt different strategies to cope with poverty. <sup>19</sup>

The definition of poverty has been expanded and reshaped as “human poverty” which addresses the denial of opportunities and choices for vulnerable groups, or denial or restriction of “capabilities” for living a most basic or “tolerable” life. This approach is valuable for our observation since it sheds light not only the symptoms of poverty, but also its causes. It also facilitates a better appreciation of the way in which gender affects poverty, as it includes issues such as poverty of decision-making power, poverty of time, poverty of means of self-determination – all capabilities which are greatly influenced by one’s gender. <sup>20</sup>

Why is it important to see poverty as a “gender issue”? And how does poverty influences women and men in the rural areas, and what are the basic differences? Poverty contributes to gender inequality for the following reasons:

- Gender-blind policies and strategies, be their poverty alleviation policies, action plans or assistance project, do not consider different needs and outcomes of these actions for women and men, thus leaving women’s needs almost unchanged.
- Gender inequalities in economic life also become a causal factor in the chronic poverty of all household members, not just of women in poor households and the intergenerational reproduction of poverty”.

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<sup>18</sup> IFAD, Armenia’s gender profile, [www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

<sup>19</sup> UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Manual

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pg 121

Gender equality is intimately connected to poverty, and not only to female poverty. Enhancing gender equality reduces poverty for men and women and their dependants, thus improving the efficiency and productive capacity of the nation as a whole.

- Addressing human poverty is about improving the quality of life, and not just the level of income, of the poor. For this reason, it is absolutely crucial that gender analysis is used when defining poverty: gender analyses shed light on issues such as power and redistribution within households, on cultural and societal barriers to autonomy, and on access to decision-making processes. In this way, looking through a gender lens can make the human dimension of poverty more concrete.
- In different countries there are systematic relationships between gender inequality and the general level of human poverty. Gender inequality and poverty should therefore be understood as a “chain reaction”, or even as a “vicious circle”. When gender inequalities are not addressed, poverty can not be fully addressed. When poverty is not put on the gender equality agenda, full attainment of gender equality cannot be achieved. Understanding poverty and gender as complexly interconnected issues will not only help alleviate poverty, but will also help achieve gender equality.

## **9. International Instruments and Mechanisms Protecting Women's Rights**

Equality of rights for women is a fundamental principle of the United Nations. The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations sets as a basic goal "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women". The provisions of the Charter regarding equal rights of women have been further refined and developed in a great number of international human rights instruments, and among them in UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979), often called as an International Bill of Rights for Women.

CEDAW is the most comprehensive instrument on women's rights. CEDAW identifies many specific areas where discrimination against women has been particularly notorious, for example, in regard to political rights, marriage and family and employment. The Convention spells out specific goals and measures that are to be taken to contribute to creation of a global society free of inequality between women and men.

On 22 December 2000, the Optional Protocol to the Convention entered into force. The Optional Protocol entitles the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to consider complaints from individual women or groups of women who have exhausted national remedies. It also entitles the Committee to conduct inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the Convention. However, this is valid only for the states, which ratified the Optional Protocol. Armenia acceded to CEDAW in 1993.

## **9.1. International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions**

The ILO Conventions cover a wide area of social and labor issues including basic human rights, minimum wages, industrial relations, and employment policy, etc. – among them a number of gender-specific issues.

It is often argued that protective measures for women might limit their opportunities to get certain jobs. The maternity benefits increase the cost of employing women and therefore might discourage their employment. However, in the case of maternity protection, these measures are necessary to protect the reproductive role of women. That is why the revised version of the Convention on Maternity protection places an emphasis on the payment of maternity benefits from social security funds and restricts the circumstances in which an employer can be held individually liable to pay them (Convention 183, article 6).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of Conventions concerning gender-specific issues:

- Maternity Protection Convention
- Night Work Women Convention
- Equal Remuneration Convention
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention
- Part-time Work Convention
- Home Work Convention.

Armenia has ratified only two ILO conventions related to equality of men and women in labour market, these are: Equal Remuneration Convention and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention.

Note: It is important to reiterate that the specialized human rights and labor treaties are all legal instruments. When a State becomes party to any of them it undertakes to guarantee to all individuals in its territory, without any discrimination, all the specified rights - and to provide for effective remedies in case violations occur.

## **9.2. UN Millennium Development Goals**

MDGs are an integrated set of eight goals and 18 time-bound targets for extending the benefits of globalization to the world's poorest citizens. The goals aim to stimulate real progress by 2015 in tackling the most pressing issues faced by developing countries.

Millennium Development Goal 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women. The very existence of a separate goal demonstrates that the global community has accepted the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the development paradigm. Goal 3 crosscuts along all the 8 MDG goals, because gender inequality is a major obstacle to meeting the MDG targets. In fact, achieving the goals will be impossible without closing the gaps between women and men in terms of capacities, access to resources and opportunities.

***Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)***

The Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment, which aims at removing all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international context.

**9.3. National Mechanisms and Instruments for Promotion of Women's Rights**

Since 1997, women's issues have been addressed by the Women's Division of the Department on Family, Women's and Children's Issues at the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues.

On 29th December, 2000, by the Decree of the Prime-Minister, a Council on Women's Issues was established under the RA Prime Minister. The Council, a volunteer body of a consultative nature, is composed of officials from different RA Ministries, members of RA National Assembly, representatives of public organizations and private sector.

The most important step towards enhancing respect for women's rights on the part of the Government was the adoption of the "National Action Plan on Improvement of Women's Status in the Republic of Armenia and Enhancement of their Role in the Society 2004-2010" (NAP) in April 2004. The NAP lays down the principles, priorities, and directions of the national policy on women's issues in the Republic of Armenia and aims to facilitate the process of ensuring equal rights and opportunities to women and men and to foster the process of addressing social and economic issues faced by women.

The NAP is composed of 8 sections addressing issues as wide as:

- Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in decision-making and in social and political spheres;
- Improving the social and economic condition of women;
- Education sector;
- Improving the health condition of women;
- Eliminating violence against women;
- Eliminating trafficking of women and girls;
- The role of the mass media and cultural institutions in reporting on women's issues and building a female role model, and
- Institutional reforms.

To ensure implementation of NAP, focal points were created at the level of Deputy Ministers, Representatives of the RA Government adjunct bodies and Deputy Marzpets.

RA legislation provides for a number of laws that ensure the equal rights of men and women, such as the Labor Code in the field of labor, employment and remuneration, and the Family

Code and Law on Citizenship in the field of marriage, etc. However, Armenia has not adopted a law on equal rights and equal opportunities, which would put in place an overall framework for guaranteeing equality of rights and opportunities for both sexes in both public and private domain and across all sectors of the society.<sup>21</sup>

## **10. Barriers for Rural Women's Participation**

Barriers for rural women's participation are quite similar to the general and most frequently found obstacles for women's participation common to different countries and societies. One of the FAO experts, M. Lally, Ireland, has described these barriers enumerating them as 4Cs.

- ***Culture:*** In that the whole ambience of politics has tended to be overwhelmingly male.
- ***Confidence:*** In that it is said that women lack the assertiveness and inbred aptitude for power of male politicians.
- ***Children:*** In that women both bear children and continue to exercise the main responsibility in relation to rearing them.
- ***Cash:*** In that rural women tend to lack resources and financial autonomy.

Further barriers to women's participation have been identified by Dr. Pat O'Hara. In a paper presented to the ALFA transnational seminar in Longford, Ireland in July 1997, she presented a clear analysis of barriers which block women in rural Ireland from equal participation in cultural, economic and political power in their local area. She identified the following socio cultural obstacles:

- Women are usually hidden in the shadows of the family farm and though immensely influential and important within family farming has no separate occupational status or public recognition for the work that they do.
- The public face of agriculture and agri-business is one of the last bastions of "maleness" whereby virtually all positions of influence and prominence are held by men.
- Male dominance has been carried over into the wider rural and local development context where women continue to be seen in their traditional "private" role of homemakers and carers and are given little space and encouragement to assume a "public role".
- Women themselves have articulated this in terms of "feeling left out" or of "not being taken seriously".

The challenge and burden of going against the grain of well-established gender roles in rural society is quite considerable and requires from women self-confidence, self-belief and

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<sup>21</sup> Public Awareness Brochure on Gender, UNDP Armenia, 2006

support, as well as ability to mobilize their collective efforts and make their voices heard through undertaking collection actions.<sup>22</sup>

Picture 2. Discussion at the Lukashin FO



## **11. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **11.1. Membership in the FAA co-operatives**

The study illustrates that non-member women cited numerous different reasons for not being a member of an FAA co-operative farm despite their connection/affiliation to agricultural production, land cultivation and farming issues, as well as commonality of problems between member and non-member women with marketing of produced goods and agricultural production, land use, cultivation, fruit/grain planting and other related issues are common.

Among the most frequent answer excluding participation of the women in FAA co-operatives was “membership of the husband”, which was interpreted by their own membership as “unnecessary” meaning that if a representative of the family is party of FAA co-operative (in most of the cases male membership), than the role of the women as an FAA member goes to the third plan and in most cases, gets lost. The “time scarcity” was the most frequent reason mentioned by non-member women as a reason for not being a member of the FAA co-operative: however, non member women would make a room in their really busy and overburdened schedules in case they would be asked to become a member, invited to the discussion, consultation, training, etc. This intention prevailed in most of the cases when women were asked if they would be positive on participating in FAA activities as members.

It was frequently the case that women were never asked or invited for FAA membership, didn't have enough information on FAA, its functions, responsibilities, mechanisms for assistance, stakeholders, its *efficiency, services and benefits*.

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<sup>22</sup> Rural Women's Participation in Ireland, M. Lally, Speech at FAO, ECA-WPW, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

## 11.2. Monthly income

More than half of both women members and non-members (54.3% and 57.6% respectively)

Income per month in AMD	Percentage
No income	5,7 %
0 -10.000	54% - 57%
10.000 -20.000	17% - 21%
20.000 - 40.000	6 % - 14%
40.000 – and over	6 % - 12%

possess /earn not more than 10,000 AMD (equal to USD 29.4) per month as their personal income. While answering to this question many women mentioned this particular range of income (0-10,000 AMD), however in many cases they don't have even half of the mentioned sum due to the

seasonal type of their activities meaning seasonal income from agricultural production, absence of off-farm employment, and in general, accumulation of financial resources in the hands of men. 17 - 21% of women possess from **AMD 10,000 -20,000 per month**. 6.1% of WNM and 14.3% of WM have mentioned possession of **AMD 20,000 - 40,000 per month**. Number of women who earn more than 40,000 AMD per month is equal to around **6% among women members** and **12% among women non members**. **Around 6% of women members do not get any income at all.**

*Such a low, almost non-existent rate of personal income and absence of paid employment makes rural women extremely dependent, limits their possibilities for further advancement, vocational training/education and employment: extreme poverty, low incomes coupled with lack of infrastructure and roads significantly hinders women's access to social, health care services and facilities.*

In comparison with women, FAA man members have a little bit different picture with incomes. Around 42.3 % of men have the same 10,000 AMD per month, their 11% - 15 % earns around 10,000 to 40,000 AMD, and 27% earns at least around 40,000 AMD per month (and more) which is around USD 164. Number of women earning similar amount of money is for several times lower, and equals to 6 - 12%. Thus, financial assets of women in the poorest group are higher in comparison to men of the same group. Then, the group of men earning more than 40,000 AMD is much larger in comparison to women – 27% against of men against 9% of women's average income (see the Table 2 below).

**Table 2. Men's Monthly Personal Income**

Income per month in AMD	Percentage
0 -10.000	42,3 %
10.000 -40.000	15%
20.000 – 40.000	11%
40.000 – and over	27 %

Source: Survey Data

In many cases, during the face-to-face meetings the non-member women have mentioned the scale 0-10,000 just to fit into the suggested range of scales somehow, and, in reality, 57 % of them are closer to 0 than to AMD 10,000.

Another fact worth mentioning regarding the income of women: the sum of 10,000 AMD and below is a *formal criteria* for calculating the approximate income since in many cases women do not spend their money on their own needs, but rather mention the money they use for public/household needs, children, etc, instead of mentioning money earned/spent on their personal needs.

### **11.3. Monthly Family Income**

The data gathered from rural women have shown that more than a half of Armenian families in the rural areas of Ararat, Armavir and Vayots Dzor earn AMD 50,000 and less income per months. The data provided by member and non member women comprises from 54-60 % of the families, while data provided by men states different percentage for the largest income:

<b>MEN'S SHARE</b>	<b>FAMILY INCOME PER MONTH</b>
<b>42,3%</b>	<b>earn 50,000 and less</b>
<b>30 %</b>	<b>earn 50,000 - 100,000,</b>
<b>7,7 %</b>	<b>earn 100,000 - 150,000</b>
<b>19,2 %</b>	<b>earn more than 150,000</b>

Source: Survey Data

The interesting particularity is that the estimate mentioned as *man's personal income and estimates of the family income* exactly coincide with each other: both criteria show **42.3 %**. This confirms the fact that the income generation of the rural families in the mentioned marzes (regions) is male-dominated, and the real financial resources in the families are being mostly earned by men and accumulated in men's hands.

Although 51 % of women members and non members of FAA think that financial resources in the family are being managed equally by women and men, the rest of results show definite differences in between the resource distribution among women groups:

28.7 % of the women members manage financial resources themselves, while financial resource management among the non members in their second largest group is as low as 9%. This data speaks for the fact that *women FAA members are more independent in their*

*households, and have three times more influence and initiative as compared with women non members.* At the same time, women non members have given the role of decision-makers to men in their second largest group which comprises around 27.3 %. This means that decisions are not taken jointly then financial resources in the families are being managed by men. Women non members almost don't see themselves as decision-makers.

An interesting data has been found on men while inquiring them on financial resource distribution: almost 70% of men have mentioned equal roles of women and men in resource distribution. Men's data has also proven that enquired men has given quite a modest place to women as decision-makers regarding financial resources – around 11% only which means that *women's status as an equal partner is not perceived.*

#### **11.4. Management of Mobile/Immobile Assets in the Families**

The role of the men in decision-making regarding land, property and other types of immobile property varies from 37.1 % stated by women members until 36.4 % stated by women non members. 34 – 39% of immobile property is being managed by men.

In the families of women members women make around 22% of property decisions, while the percentage of the same decisions in the families of non-members is as low as 9.1 %.

*This finding clearly shows that active participation in the public life influences the role and influence of women in the families as well. The characteristic feature of findings in this category shows that the role of women as decision-makers in the family with regards to immobile property were non-existent for men, i.e. no man has mentioned women as decision-makers on the issues of property, land, etc.*

Mobile assets in the families of women members of FAA are being distributed more or less evenly: 34.4 % is managed equally, the same percent is managed by men, while women manage around 22.9 % of the mobile property.

*The role of non member women as decision-makers is significantly lower – it is equal to 9.1 % only, while 39% of decisions on mobile property in their families is being made by men.*

*Men have shown 65.4 % of joint decisions in the family, while the rest of decisions are being made only by them. In the best case women are being consulted during the joint decisions.*

## **11.5. Household management**

***Women's membership and participation in the public life plays significant role with regards to their status in the family and their role as individual decision-makers. Women from the non members group have shown significant dependency on man's role in the family coupled with acknowledgement of the men as main decision-makers.***

In general, Armenian society has a male dominated structure, especially in the sphere of agribusiness and in the rural areas. Traditionally, the role of the man as a bread-winner has been considered as a social norm: however, the difference on women's attitudes on men's role within the family shows more even role distribution of women and men as decision-makers regarding the household management in the families of FAA women members: 34.3% - for man as decision-makers, 34.3% for joint decision making, and rather high percent of *women decision-makers* – 28.6%).

***Almost half of the non member women see the role of the man as the most significant regarding the household management. Only 12.1% of women non members make decisions regarding the household themselves.***

The evidence found during the face-to-face interviews and observations argues that in the non-member group women decision-makers were mostly those women whose husband has migrated abroad, so their decision-making role resulted from the objective circumstances rather from their willingness, initiative of independence.

***The data provided by men shows their true role as decision-makers regarding the household: more than 80% see their role as the only decision-makers in the families, and the percentage of joint/unanimous decisions with women regarding the household matters is quite low – 15.4% only.***

This finding argues for the fact that not only the role of the men in the inquired marzes is strong and uncontested, but also that the position of the rural women is viewed by men as a secondary. Men see the women as a housewife, mother, but definitely not a decision maker: this attitude creates further problems for women to be heard, active and also seriously take part in decision-making both in their families and in the public life. Although the role of Armenian women has been traditionally bound to the household, the women's voice as decision makers regarding the household matters is quite weak.

***To enable a more favorable environment for rural women's participation it's necessary to start working with men and men's attitudes making them more gender-sensitive, advocating for women's equal rights and opportunities, as well as use the team-work approach and trainings/simulations targeting inclusion of women as equal decision-makers.***

## **12. Task Distribution between Women and Men**

There are three types of activities characterized by *male, female and joint execution*. Namely, the workloads related to the maintenance of the household, cattle breeding, paddy land cultivation, harvest, etc. keep both women and men busy, especially during the seasonal workloads at spring, summer and autumn. However, in addition to this, women get double burden because of the child care, housekeeping and all the related tasks related to the housekeeping, and traditionally “prescribed” to her from childhood.

### **12.1. Household Management**

In 60% of the cases **household management** is considered a male-executed job by both women members and non members, while this percentage is significantly higher in the families of non member women showing 72.7%.

### **12.2. Other Tasks**

60-66% of women consider land irrigation to be typically male executed task, while the inquired men states 84.6% for the same job.

There are tasks which are typically done by women, such as *plucking*: 80% of the women members acknowledge this task as a women’s business, 60.6% of women non members do this task themselves, and 84.6 % of the men consider plucking to be a typical women’s responsibility. *Milking* is also considered to be a women’s responsibility by the all groups inquired.

*Animal care* keeps all the three groups busy almost evenly:

Women members state 34.3 %, while in the non member women’s families 21% of women deals with animal care coupled with 30.3 % of men. Animal care is more or less evenly distributed among the women and men taking around 20-30% distribution among them.

*Harvesting* takes most of the time of the rural population in the mentioned regions during the summer - autumn. 45.7% of women members, 42.4% of non members and around 30 % of men do the harvesting. In the families of FAA members – both women and men, majority of the harvesting activities are being done by women, while families of non-member women share this responsibility with men more evenly (42.4% women, 48.5% together).

All the tasks related to the *daily maintenance of the household, such as cooking, cleaning, child and elderly care, shopping*, etc. are done by women due to their traditional role as mothers, housekeepers, wives, etc. which is evident both from the data received from women and men. No man does any of these tasks due to their traditional “female” nature.

*Stocking Firewood*: In the families of women members this task is fulfilled by 54.3% of women, while the data taken from the non-member families and men members’ families

shows that it is being executed 50/50 by women and men. It should be noted, however, that the firewood stocking became not very actual since during the recent years the villages and regions of Armenia got gas and solve their problems with heating without firewood stocking.

### **13. Household related decision-making**

Decisions regarding the household, management of the paddy lands, land cultivation, selling the harvest, and other similar issues usually reflect the areas of activity for women and men, that is – the areas where women and men share their responsibilities and agree on decision-making model.

According to our study the picture looks as follows:

Women members make 17.1 % of responsibility for household decisions, while 71.4% of these decisions are being made jointly. Percentage of men single headedly making decisions in these families is quite low – around 8.6 %.

The picture is different in the women non-member's families: men make 27.3 % of household related decisions, while women make 9%. Percentage of joint household decisions is higher – 63.6%. While observing the situation one must take into account that most of the rural women tend to present decisions in reality made by men as joint ones. The causes for these results are quite simple: during the interviews one could observe the tendency to “look good” in front of the interviewers since women tried to escape giving “negative” information and answers that wouldn't fit into the “positive” expected standard. Then, even all the women and men were informed about anonymous nature of the interviews and all the information provided, however more accommodative answers made especially women feel more secure.

Consequently, the high percentage of joint decisions does not speak in favor of women taking into consideration the above-mentioned argument.

The reality and very diminished role of women in the household decision-making is obvious from the men member's answers: the category of women as decision-makers in the family, is simply missing. Men decisions constitute 42.3 %, and joint decisions make 57.7%.

## **14. Technical Assistance to the Farmers**

The degrees and types of assistance received by FAA co-operatives can be summarized as follows:

Most of the women members mentioned assistance provided by FAA in the form of seeds, fertilizers, opportunities for credit, and information. The data on other types of technical assistance is incomplete. About 6% received assistance with transportation.

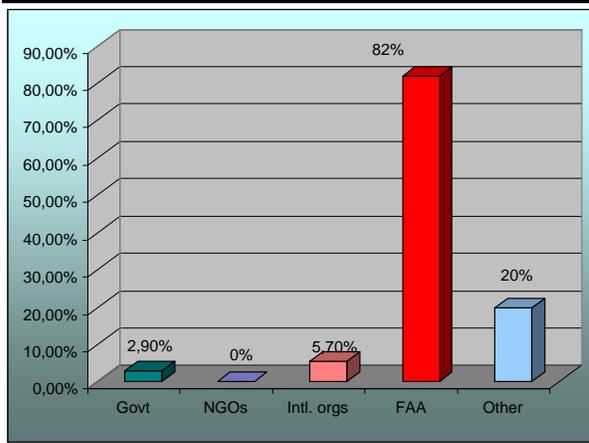
Few of the non-member women whose husbands were FAA members, have benefited from FAA though receiving seeds and fertilizers, however, most of the non member women did not get any assistance. Chances for getting information and credits are lower within the women non members since their access to information resources and consultancy proved to be lower than FAA member's ones.

The group of men members mentioned to receive seeds, fertilizers, transportation assistance: around 61% of men got assistance in the form of credits: access to credits for men is almost two times higher in comparison with women of the same families and community. Men also are better informed or have better access for information – almost 77% receives information assistance. For comparison only 36.4 % of the non member women mentioned receipt of information as a form of assistance.

### **14.1. Sources of assistance**

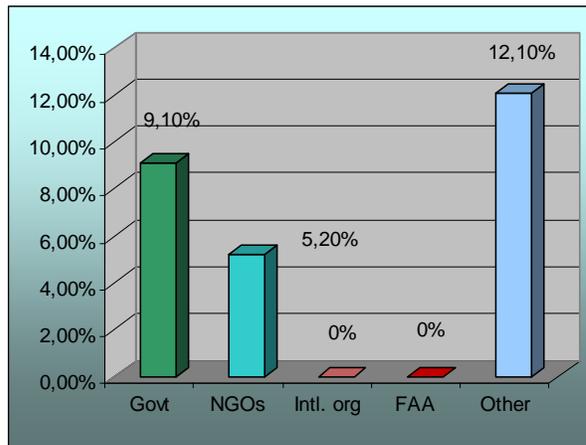
The inquired groups have mentioned different sources of assistance, namely governmental bodies, NGOs, FAA, international organizations and other sources of assistance. For many of them other sources for assistance come from their relatives or migrant family members currently working and living in Russia, other CIS countries, US and other European states.

**Chart 1. Assistance received by women members**



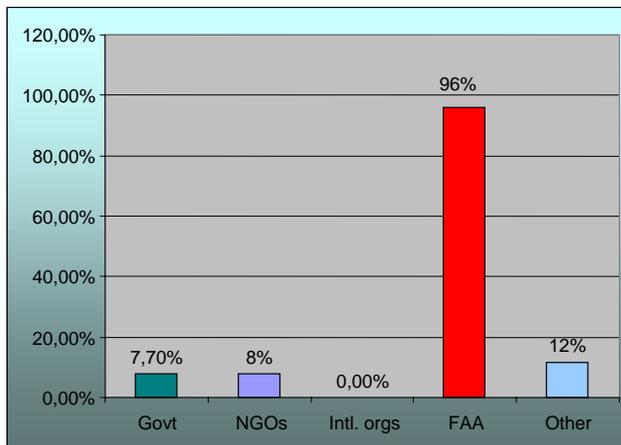
Source: Survey Data

**Chart 2. Assistance received by women non members**



Source: Survey Data

**Chart 3. Assistance received by the men members**



Source: Survey Data

Women FAA members benefit more in terms of assistance from the FAA and their membership than non member women. 96% of women members confirmed getting their assistance from FAA, which include fertilizers, seeds, and consultancy/trainings. On the other hand, women non members get majority of their assistance from other sources, like assistance from relatives abroad, and a very low number of assistance comes from NGOs.

*Thus, in order to have equal opportunities with FAA members, non member women would benefit from joining the structure of FAA in order to enlarge opportunities for getting more information about its benefits, services, resources and marketing of their production.*

## **15. Service provision**

### **15.1. Consultancy and training**

Women members also benefit from consulting services provided by FAA: around 57% of women members benefit from consulting services according to the received data.

From all the women of FAA only 34.3 % benefited from the trainings provided by FAA – most of the data on women’s participation is missing due to their non-participation. As regards to the non member women most of them did not benefit from any consulting services, except for a small help from NGOs comprising around 5% of women.

Around 18% of non member women considered themselves to be participants of trainings provided by NGOs, and 21.2 % received technical assistance. However, the number of missing data, i.e. those who could not answer to the questions of assistance, makes a room for an argument that in general NGO assistance to these particular communities was somehow not directed to the non member women. This argument becomes even more valid in regards to the next questions related to women’s participation.

In the training/discussion events given to 45.5% of non member participants, and 13 women out of 33 gave no answer to the question of participation.

The percentage of women members’ participation to the events and trainings provided by FAA and other organizations is much higher than that of non member women ones – it constitutes around 68% in total which is quite high for the rural areas.

84.6 % of the men, which means most of them, are steadily participating in the trainings – the FAA local branch managers announce meetings, trainings and events upcoming, which makes it easier for men to be more organized and participate to the events of FAA.

## **16. Participation of Women and Men**

In general, participation in the FAA and its membership played a significant role and showed real difference not only in member – non member participation: it also revealed the lack of information which non members have in comparison to the FAA members.

To check this argument we can compare the answers of the three groups of inquired groups: Women members have clear picture on women’s and men’s participation, which is in both cases (for men and women) quite high – around 91 % for men and around 74% for women. Non member women stated only 39 % of participation and around 21% of non-participation of women in the events: 13 out of 33 could not answer the question due to the absence of information.

### **16.1. Attitudes on Participation**

Behavior of women during the general, mixed women/men group meetings where men members were present was quite different than during men’s absence – this fact was noticed and observed during the whole process of interviews, face-to-face meetings, field visits and final consultations of the research team. Changes of the attitudes, such as more detailed approach and willingness to understand the questions, as well as more sincere answers to the questions given earlier (even corrections of answers from positive to the negative), were observed in many cases.

Here is some data received as a result of interviews of the mentioned groups of women and men.

*Women, especially non members, are not specifically informed about these events, or upcoming discussions, agendas, issues. In addition, in comparison to the women, men are free from the housework which also plays a decisive role for high percentage of men’s participation. No flexible schedules are arranged for general meetings which will allow women to be present and balance their workloads freeing some time for participation, events, trainings, consultancy, etc. provided by FAA.*

**Table D. Behavior of women in man’s presence during the meetings: Women members**

Behavior type	Percentage
Active	51.4%
Passive	8.6%
Neutral	14.3%
Constrained	11.4%
Total	85.7%
Not sure	14.3%

**Women members** gave around 51% of active participation during the meetings, while 11.4 % feel themselves constrained, 14 % are neutral and 8.6 % are passive which means that only half of participants feel themselves comfortable for participation in the FAA joint discussions and events, while the rest of them, for different reasons, remain silent or neutral and make no contribution to the decision-making process.

**Non member women:** the table proves significant decrease of participation rate within the non member women’s group, especially with regards to the active behavior. **Around 72% of them** could not answer the question on behavior of women during the events and discussions due to their absence or lack of information. **Interestingly enough, however, is the 15.2 % of women non members pointed on constrained behavior during the meetings which makes one think on stereotypical attitudes and non-attractive environment for women’s participation:**

**These two factors proclaim men as a public figure whose participation to the public life and community decision-making is natural, and, at the same time, prescribe or advocate the “women’s place in the house” attitude: this observation was received from majority of women and was confirmed with data received from both female and male participants of the study.**

**Table E. Behavior of non member women in man’s presence during the meetings**

Behavior type	Percentage
Active	6,1
Passive	6,1
Constrained	15,2
Total	27.3%
No answer	72.7%

**Source: Survey Data**

65% of the men thought that women are active during their presence, 15.4% states women’s non active behavior, and 3.8% considered women’s behavior neutral or constrained. However, it should be noted that men mostly saw women members during their joint FAA activities, whose participation rates were higher in comparison with the non members’ one.

**Table F. Men’s Attitude to Women’s Participation**

Group name	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Women members	80%	14,3 %	–
Women non members	42,4%	6,1 %	24,2 %
Men members	73,1%	11,5 %	–

**Source: Survey data**

The table shows that the issue of participation of women and men's attitude in the families and rural society are quite controversial. While the women and men from the FAA state no negative attitude to women's participation, women non members clearly identify quite a significant rate of existing negative attitude of men to women's participation. The positive sign, however, is that still around 42 % of non members think that the attitude of their men will be positive, which still need a serious proof in reality apart from being just a "looking nice" argument.

## **17. Women's Rights**

### **17.1. Freedom to choose employment**

Freedom of choice with regards to employment is one of the problematic issues women face in reality. Opportunities for employment are limited in the whole country, especially in the rural areas. Lack of working places is not the only problem: many women, due to the objective or subjective reasons, are not free to choose themselves the type of employment they wanted.

In our research, the attitude of men, family members (especially the attitude of the older members of the family), and the attitude of society to women's employment in general plays a crucial role in the life of women in terms of their independence, financial situation, status, possibilities for career development and growth, etc.

Freedom to freely choose employment is an unalienable human right which must be equally accessible for all the members of the society, independently of their gender.

About 66% of the FAA **women members** confirmed their freedom to choose employment, while 14% have restrictions in making their choice. Fourteen percent have no freedom to choose employment.

**Non member women** have shown around 75.8% rate of freedom to choose their employment, however 21.2 % are denied from this right.

Around 96% of **men** are positive regarding the women's right to choose employment, while only 4% thinks there are limitations for women in this area.

It should be clarified that the majority of enquired women had secondary education, and many have never been busy with neither off farm employment or any other kind of official job.

## **18. Barriers for women’s participation in the public and community life**

During the observation and the whole implementation of the study the research team received different results regarding the barriers or causes for women’s low participation in the FAA structures, employment, and active public/community life. Most of the non active women have mentioned significant pressure in their families in the issues of their personal participation in the public and community life, including strong limitations of their freedom of movement and associated rights.

Namely, women members have mentioned existence of family problems (14 out of 33) in the issues related to women’s public participation, no support from husbands in these issues, or existence of pressure from other family members, especially the older people which, in many cases, have the highest decision-making status in their families. This tendency was especially true and relevant to the young women, and had significant influence to their attitudes and their status within the families.

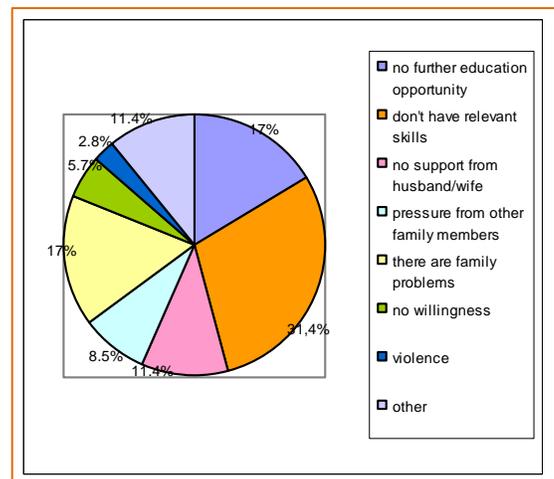
During informal conversations many of the young women complained of these limitations, naming negative attitudes of the older women as decisive even for their husbands in the newly formed families.<sup>23</sup> In addition, family problems mentioned can be regarded as mainly as problems with negative attitudes of husbands and their parents to women’s participation issues, which makes more than 60 % of family attitudes negative.

Among other reasons for non-participation women members have mentioned lack of adequate skills and education/knowledge, and, as a result, felt uncomfortable to participate in public meetings together with men. They have also mentioned time scarcity and heavy workloads to be preventive causes for their participation.

*The first most popular cause for non-participation was family problems, i.e. identifiable negative attitude of husband or other family members to the issue of participation. The second prevalence in the answers of non-member women has been given to the cause of non-confidence for participation because of lack of relevant skills. Lack of opportunities for further education, which can also be regarded as lack of relevant skills, is the third most popular answer.*

**Chart 4 . Non-member Women: Causes for non-participation**

Lack of skills and further education opportunities were also mentioned by the men members as major obstacles for participation: thus, general capacity building, skill enhancement and trainings directly targeting issues of participation and empowerment, are quit urgent measures to be implemented within the regional communities of FAA both for women and men.

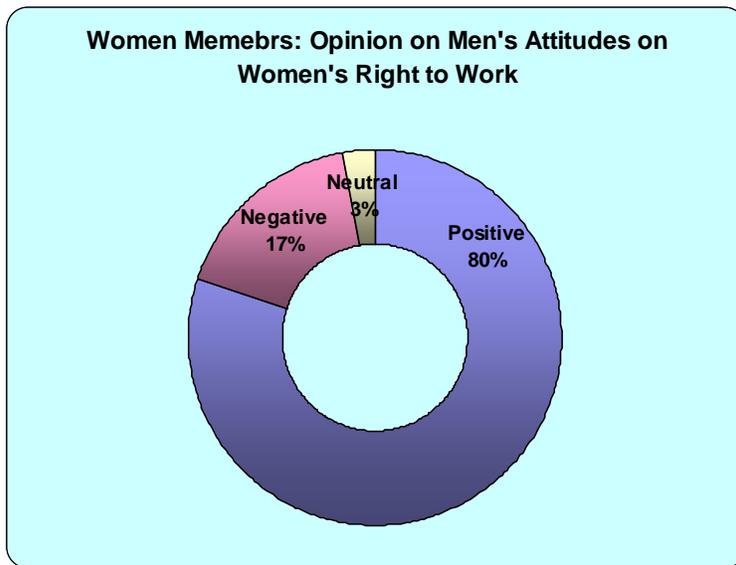


<sup>23</sup> Armenian families both in urban and rural areas live together with their parents (mostly husband’s parents).

### **19. Men's attitude to women's right to work**

Most of the women members thought that men's attitudes to their right to work is positive, while 17% considered that men deny this right with regards to women.

**Chart 5. WM's Opinion on Men's Attitudes on Women's Rights to Work**

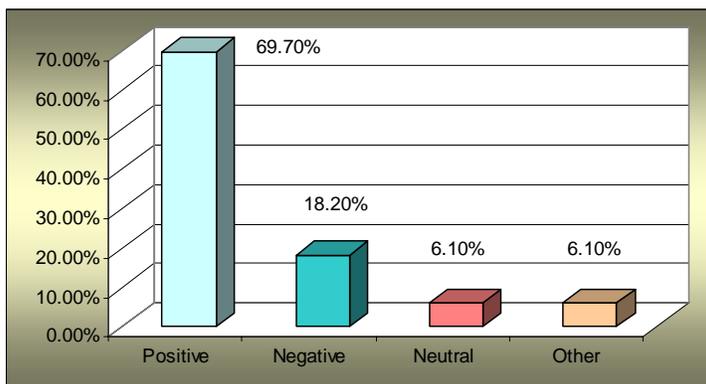


Women non member's opinion with regards to men's attitudes to their right to work was less optimistic in comparison with women members' one: however, it is still almost around 70% percent positive. It's almost the same with regards to the men's negative attitude - it seems around 17-18% of both women members and non members think that men do not approve their right to work (see Chart 5 and Chart 6).

Source: Survey data

There is around 11% difference in between the positive estimates between the members and non members leaning to the more passive attitudes in the group of non members.

**Chart6. WNM Opinion on Men's Attitudes on Women's Rights to Work**



Source: Survey data

## **20. Equal pay for women and men**

As per results of the study, both member and non member women's majority considered that there is no wage difference in women's and men's work, i.e. both sexes doing the same type/kind of job receive equal remuneration. This opinion comprises 66-71 % of women in the marzes of Ararat, Armavir and Vayots Dzor.

17% of women members and 12% of non members consider that the payments for work are done according to merits, like quality, quantity of implemented tasks, etc.

Around 8.6 % of women members and 6.1 % of women non members deem that men are getting more than women do. Roughly 6 % of the non members also point out that women are getting less money for their job in comparison to men.

Almost 54% of men members stated no wage difference between women and men while performing the same types of duties, whereas almost 27% think that the payment rate depends on excellence and amount of work carried out by women and men. About 15% of men consider their wages being higher than women's and 3.8% believe women's wages are higher than men's ones.

Thus, majority of women and men did not mention wage difference and any inequality in remuneration for the same kind of jobs fulfilled by either women or men.

## **21. Equal rights within rural communities**

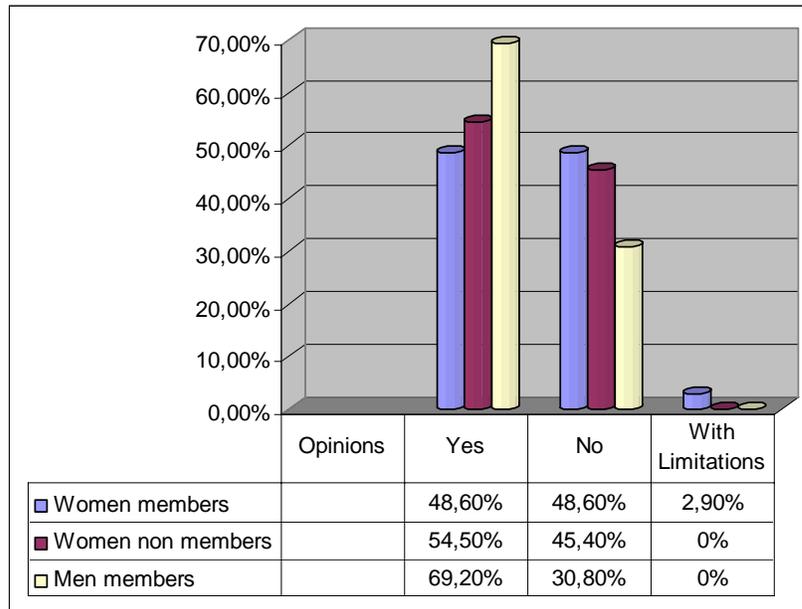
Comparing the results of responses in regard to having equal rights within the rural communities, 48.6% of member women and 54.5% of women non members believe that they do have equal rights in their community. 48.6% of women members and 45.4% women non members negate the idea of sharing equal rights and opportunities with men. Almost 3% of women members consider having equal rights but with some restrictions.

Taking into account answers given by men members we can clearly observe that on the one hand 69.2% believe that there is no gender inequity, on the other hand 30.8% of men confirmed inequality of rights between women and men within their community.

Thus, roughly around half of women members and non members think that they do have equal rights with men within their community (see the Chart 7 below), while women members also see some restrictions or limitations for equality of rights. Although rather high percentage of men think that equality of rights exists in reality, still 30.8 % do not agree with this opinion: according to them women do not have equal rights with them.

*Around half of member and non member women consider themselves denied for equal rights and opportunities with men: this opinion is even more frequent within the women members and makes 48.6%.*

**Chart 7. Equal Rights within Community**



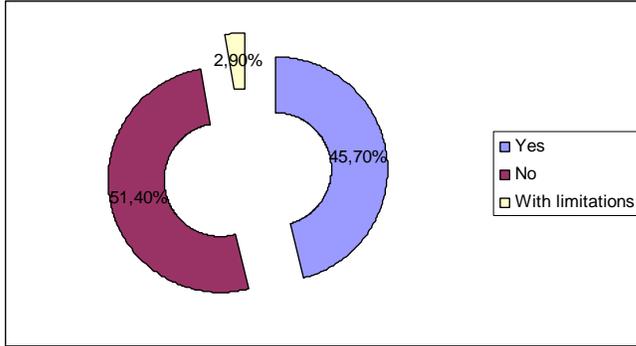
Source: Survey data

## **22. Women’s and Men’s rights in the family**

The following results were received touching the issue of men’s and women’s rights within the family: 45.7% of women members and 66.7% of women non members consider their rights to be equal within the family in comparison to men. 76.9% of men also consider equality within their families achieved. However, higher percentage of women members – more than half, does not agree with these opinions and think equality between women and men within their families is absent. Plus, around 2.9 % of women members see barriers and restrictions for implementation of their equal rights within the family. Around 33.3% of women non members also agree with the latter opinion, which however is around 12% less than we can see among women members.

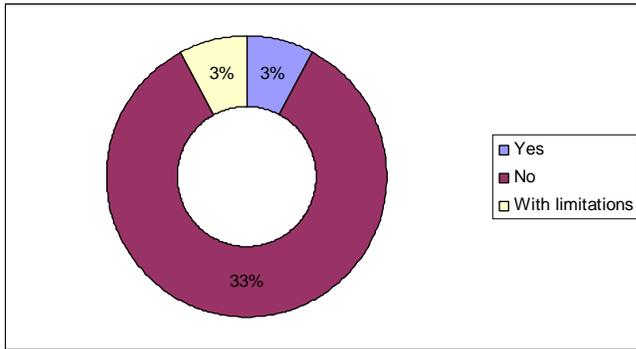
Men have shown 23, 1% support to the opinion on non equal situation between women and men in the families.

**Chart 8. WM: Equal Rights within the Family**



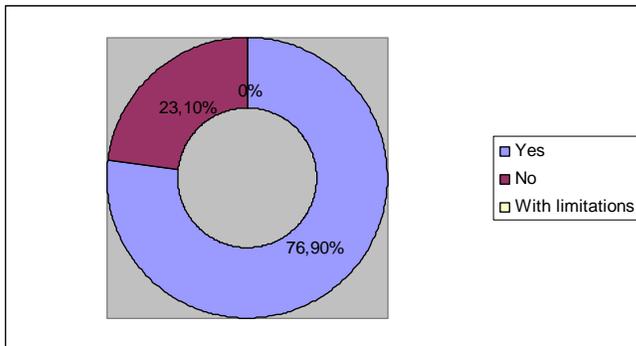
Source: Survey Data

**Chart 9. WNM: Equal Rights within the Family**



Source: Survey Data

**Chart 10. Men's opinion on Equal Rights within the Family**



Source: Survey Data

### **23. Management of agricultural production, income and land ownership rights**

According to our research majority of women (both members and non members) think that management decisions with regards to received/produced agricultural products, i.e. crops, fruits, vegetables, etc., income and land ownership are being taken jointly within their families – these decisions comprise around 88 – 94%. The total majority of men agree on this issue with women.

Nevertheless, it's hard to imagine both spouses to take decisions equally within all the mentioned areas (especially with regards to land ownership and income), with the same access and power in decision-making since our previous results on women's and men's status and decision-making powers within the family, as well as results showing income distribution between women and men, have shown that most of the women members do not consider themselves having equal rights and opportunities in comparison with men, and do not possess similar financial, property, and other resources with men.<sup>24</sup>

11.4% of women members and 3% of women non members responded that they possess single right to management and decision-making processes as compared with men. These results show that ability to make independent decisions and capacities enabling women for full implementation of their basic rights within the family are quite restricted, and need rapid enhancement and assistance. First of all, there is a need to re-shape men's attitudes to the notion of women decision-makers, and secondly, to create adequate environment

*During the face-to-face meetings women were not even sure what property do they own: they consider men's property to be theirs too, but in case there is a need for decision-making with regards to that property, most of the women would give the power of decision-making to men. Thus, their right to ownership is formal, and even guaranteed under the national/international law, is not being used or implemented in reality.*

encouraging women to be involved in FAA activities, discussions, meetings and, which is especially important, in decision-making processes. Assistance is needed to raise public awareness on women's ownership rights, financial schemes, make credits accessible for women, and develop women's entrepreneurship based on their capacities, their own ideas and regional particularities.

### **24. Application of the Right to Ownership**

The general assumption and awareness on women's rights to ownership, management of family assets and similar rights within the studied rural communities and villages was not adequately perceived because of the general low awareness on human rights, especially concerning the rights of women. As a result even active women members mentioning the rights to

<sup>24</sup> See the previous section 15.0. on Women's and Men's Rights within the family.

manage agricultural products, land ownership and their realization in practice, gave 77.1% to the option confirmed existence of women's rights and their implementation according to the law. However, only 51% confirmed using their rights in practice, while 34.3% denied usage of these rights in reality.

About 60.6% of women non members think that the mentioned rights exist according to the law and are being used: more than 30% of this group considers that these rights traditionally belong to men. The same tendency in using property and resource management related rights exists in the data received from the non member women: only 51% of them have ever used these rights, while more than 48% has never been using their ownership/property rights in real life.

In comparison to women, around 77% of men consider that ownership/property rights exist and are being used, while their majority (84.6%) uses these rights regularly. Also, 11.5% of men consider that according to tradition these rights belong to men.

Strong stereotypical attitudes on men's ownership and influence, decision-making, resource management rights, and diminished role of women within the society are results of the poor awareness on women's equal rights, gender equality principles and non-effective mechanisms on human rights protection. Lack of knowledge, absence of community mobilizing powers and isolation of the rural areas also complement to the above mentioned situation.

## **25. Awareness on Human/Women Rights: ability to address violations**

Results on awareness on human rights protection institutions are as follows: around 63% of women members were positive on whom to address if their rights are violated, and mentioned judicial bodies in general, courts or local self-government bodies as rights protection organizations. 34.3% did not know where to go in case their rights are violated.

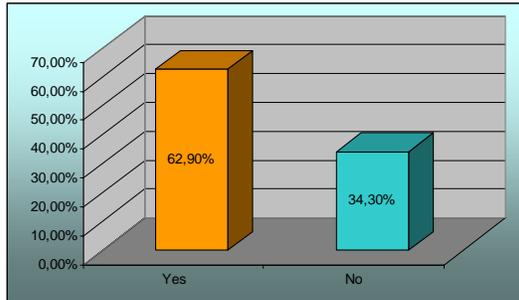
Among non members 75.8% would go to judicial bodies, courts or local self-government bodies in case violations occur: 24.2% of women non members did not know whom to address.

Men's awareness on rights protection bodies was higher in comparison with women from both groups: 84.6% of them are aware on rights protection organizations, mentioning legal counseling, local self-government, ministries, police, etc.

Most of the population believed their rights could be protected with the help of governmental or judicial bodies without giving the names of concrete institutions dealing with human rights violations: there was no single answer stating Human Rights Defenders' Office as rights protection organization or any other rights protection organization. General level of awareness on Human Rights protection mechanisms, norms, laws, international standards, as

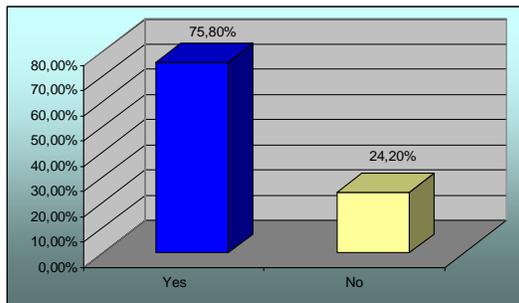
well as national legislation procedures proved to be very low. The interviewed groups could identify only probable bodies they would address, so the charts below show just the number of opinions with regards to people's knowledge on whom to address in case of violations in general, and not their particular knowledge/or awareness on Human Rights

Chart 1. WM: Whom to address in case of rights violations



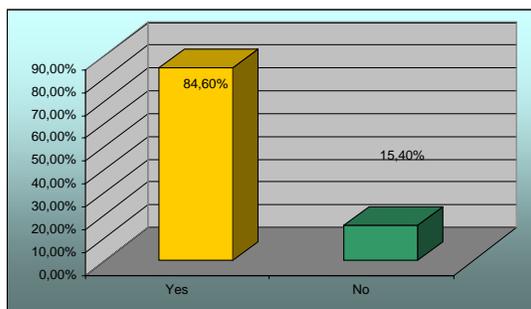
Source: Survey Data

Chart 2. WNM: Whom to address in case of rights violations



Source: Survey Data

Chart 3. MM: Whom to address in case of rights violations

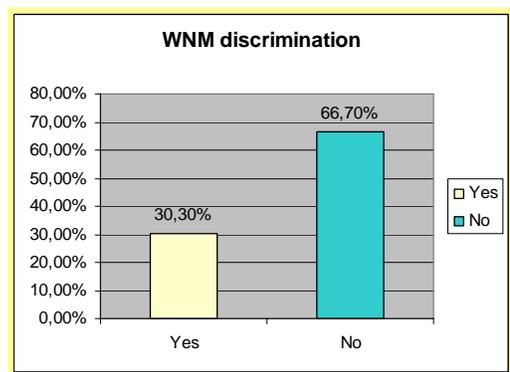
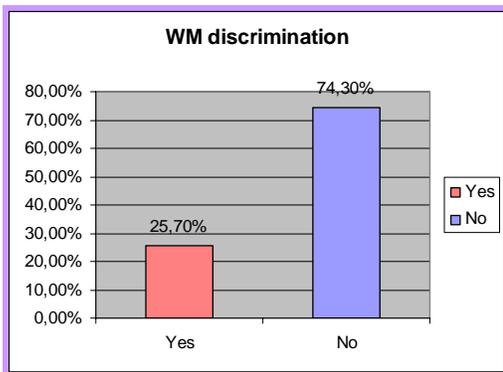


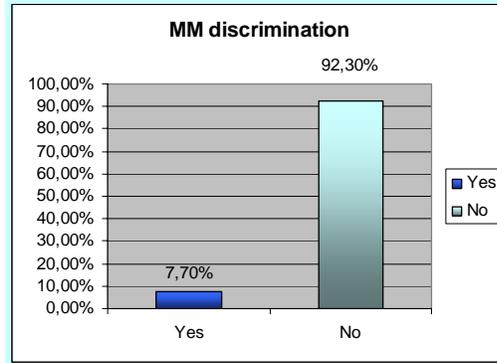
Source: Survey Data

*This finding reveals non equal status of women members with regards to management/access to assets, agricultural production, financial resources/income, as well as land/property ownership. In addition, around 20% of women members mentioned that decision-making powers and property/asset related decisions traditionally belong to the men, which speaks about existence of strong stereotypical thinking on the role of women and men within the society and existence of adequate rights and models of “expected behavior” in studied communities. To improve the situation major information/public awareness campaign on human rights, gender equality, mechanisms for participation and community mobilization, as well as capacity-building trainings are needed both for women and men of the mentioned rural communities. These measures would help to enable the passive sector of rural population and would stimulate participatory decision-making within communities and within FAA.*

**26. Discrimination within the family**

74.3% of women members and 66.7% of non members think that they do not face discriminatory practices within their families. However, 25.7% of WM and 30.3% of WNM respectively confirmed existence of discrimination at home. Percentage of discrimination is slightly higher in the WNM’s families than in WM’s families. About 92.3% of men do not face any discrimination within their families, and only 7.7% confirmed its existence.





Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

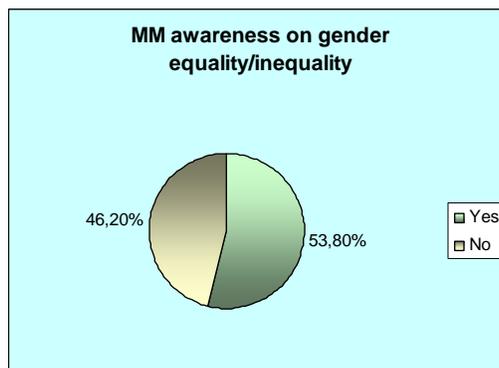
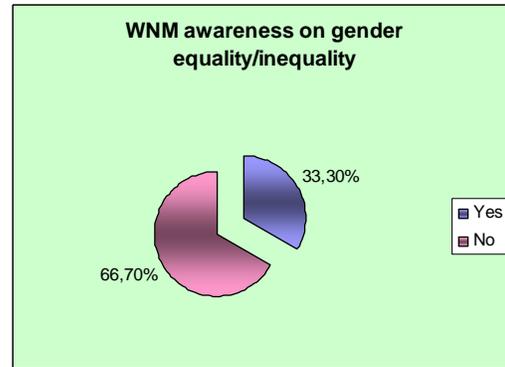
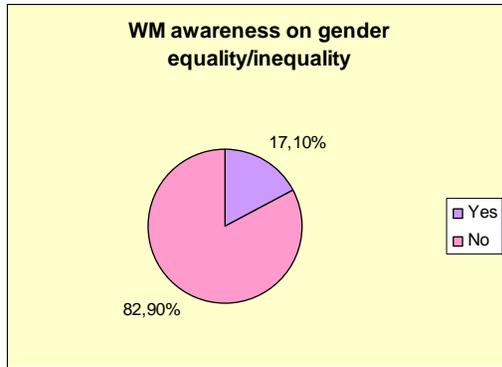
## **27. Awareness on Gender Equality, Equal Rights and Opportunities**

*Majority of women and men did not have idea on gender equality, principles of equal rights and opportunities, as well as strongly differentiate women's and men's role within the rural community.*

70-80% of women (both members and non-members) are not acquainted to the concept of gender in general: very low awareness on equal opportunities, equality in participation, general human and women rights principles was observed during the whole period of research and field visits/face-to-face meetings.

Although men has shown a slightly higher awareness on notions of gender, however their understanding and perception on the role of women, especially women's rights and obligations are strongly biased by traditional and stereotypical patriarchal way of thinking and attitudes.

*No awareness exists on causes of discrimination and gender inequalities within their communities. This issue needs major capacity-building and awareness raising since both groups had very fuzzy understanding of gender, gender quality, women's rights and in general, human rights implementation mechanisms. Also, not a single person mentioned any national or international mechanisms or institutions preventing gender inequalities or promoting gender-sensitive strategies on national, regional or international levels.*



Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

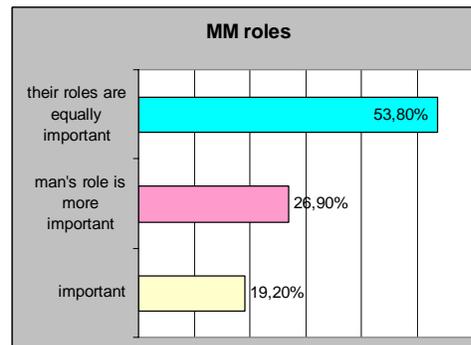
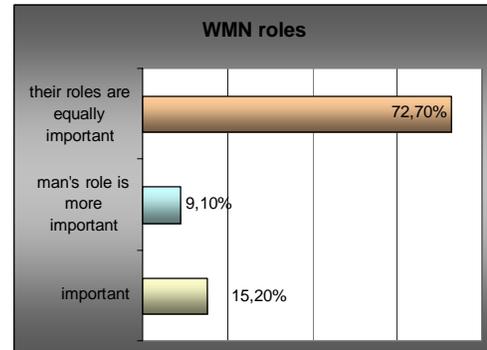
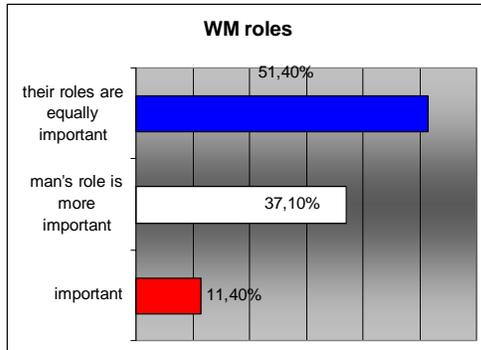
## **28. Women’s Role in development of society and country**

Major differences in positions on women’s role exist within the researched groups.

Slight majority of WMs consider that women’ a men’s role are equally important, and 37 % of the same women members thinks men’s role is more important within society. Only 11.4% of WMs consider their role important. This result argues for non-confidence and non-appreciation of women’s role in general, and especially their role in development of society and country.

Women non members have much higher percentage of opinions stating equality of women’s and men’s roles - around 73%. 15.2% considers their role important, and 9.1 % thinks that men have prevalence.

The lowest percentage stating equality of women and men is observed within the men’s group: only 53% appreciate input of both sexes, and almost 30% thinks that men’s input and role in the development of society and country at large is more essential. Only 19.2% of men considered the role of women important.



Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

## **29. Self esteem and Self-realization**

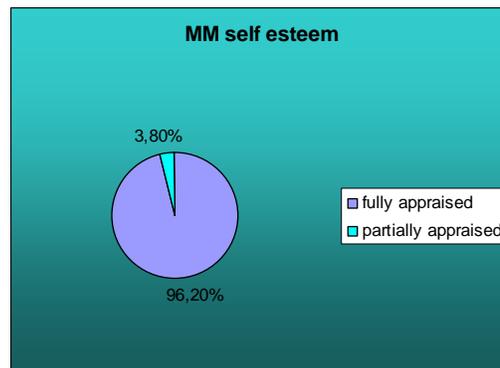
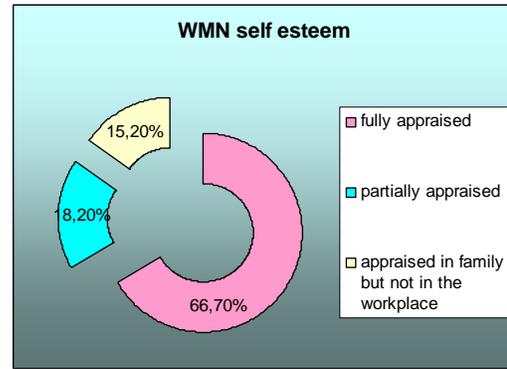
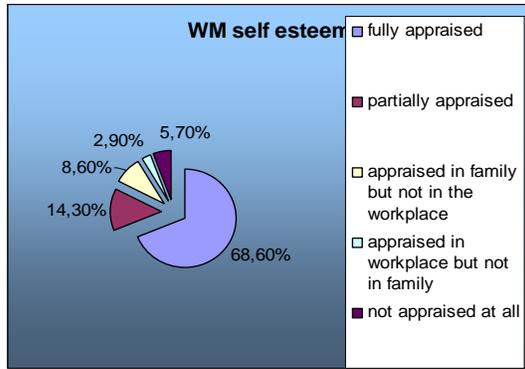
### **29.1. Self-esteem**

Men members feel fully appraised for their work and skills (96%), while only 66-68% of women can agree with them. 14.3% of women members and 18.2% of women non members feel partly appreciated.

The rest of women feel themselves appraised in the family, but not at the workplace (8.6-15.2%). This option is more frequent within the women non members.

Among the women members there are also small groups that feel do not appreciated or appreciated at the workplace, but not in the families.

Interestingly enough women non members did not mention any of these options in their answers despite mentioning similar opinions non-officially during the face-to-face meetings and post-interview discussions.



Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

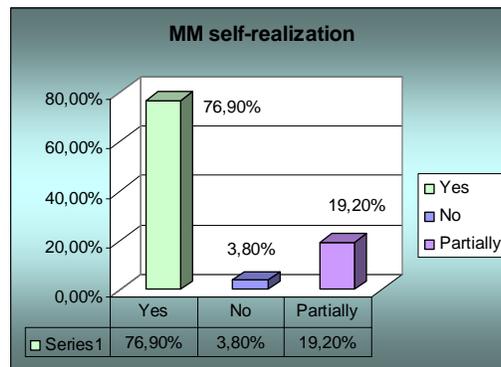
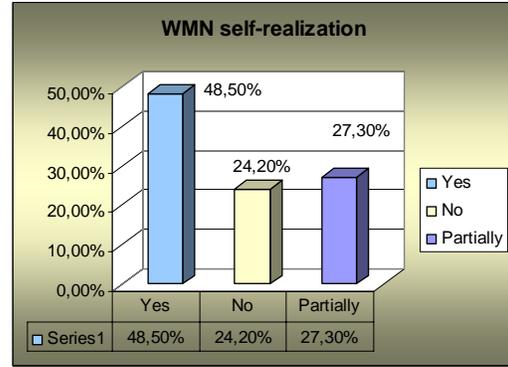
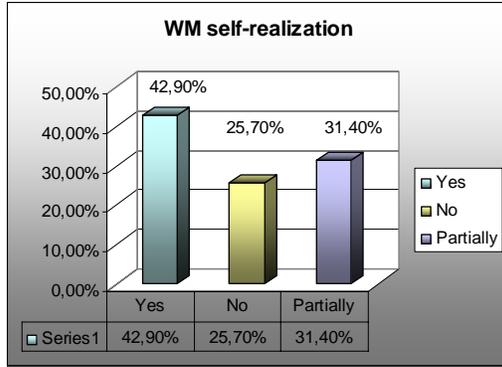
## **29.2. Self-realization**

48.5 % of women non members and almost 43% of women members think of themselves as self -realized, i.e. those who fully realized their potential.

24.2 – 25.7% of women do not think being self-realized, and 27 - 31% has mentioned feeling themselves as partially self-realized.

In comparison to women, the vast majority of men feel themselves self-realized, and only 19% consider themselves partially realized.

***This difference is another proof with regards to women's low self-esteem and self-appreciation which gives very close percentage distribution between women members and non members.***



Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

### 30. Skills Wanted

The following skills were mentioned as lacking by the researched groups.

Women members have mentioned **communication** as the most wanted skill: negotiation and management skills were mentioned as a second necessity. Strategic decision-making was the third most popular demand among the women members.

Women non members also named **communication** skills as the most demanded ones. Leadership and negotiation were mentioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> popular respectively. A low percentage of women in this group have mentioned demand for management skills.

**Leadership** was named the most popular skill among men: management and communications were named as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular ones among them.

Chart A. Percentage of desirable skills' distribution for women members

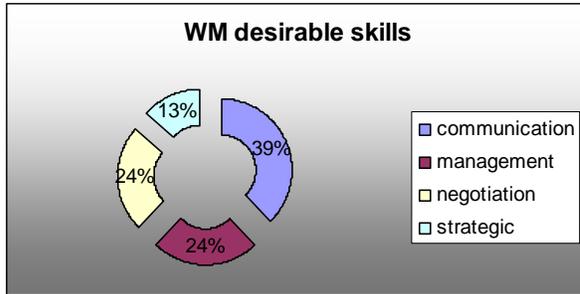


Chart B. Percentage of desirable skills' distribution for women non -members

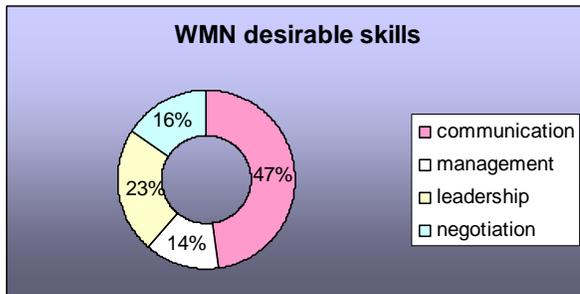
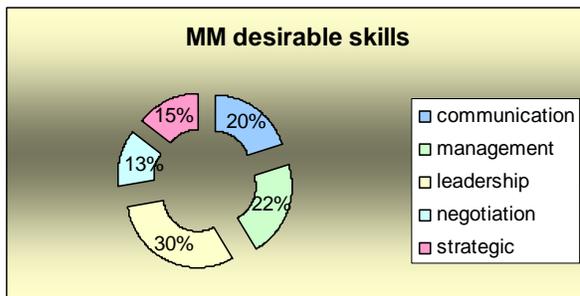


Chart C. Percentage of desirable skills' distribution for men members



Source: Survey Data (refers to all the Charts above)

## **31. Gender Analysis of Demographic Data**

### **31.1. Member Women**

The results of the study show that the majority of the inquired *women members* under the **18-24 and 25-44 age groups possess secondary education**: they are mainly involved in household and unpaid farm activities like *planting, gardening, orchards, animal husbandry*. As to their marital status, the *majority got married at the age of 16-20*, the second popular age of marriage being 21-25.

The age of marriage for women members under 45-64 age group is 16-20, 25 and more. The majority has secondary education, only three out of 35 possess higher education. They are also involved in household activities in the fields of gardening, orchards, planting, and animal husbandry. However some of the member women also share the farm management duties with their husbands.

As to their participation in FAA activities, the prevailing mood is passive which is conditioned by the heavy workloads and time scarcity of rural women.

### **31.2. Non-member women**

**14 out of 33 of non-member women under 18-24 and 25-44 age groups possess secondary education**, another 5 women have only partial secondary education. Almost all of them are married **the most common age of marriage being that of 16-20**. Most of the women under 45-64 and more have secondary education only three of them possessing higher education.

**Non-member women are involved only in their household and farm activities**. The most common reason for their non-participation in FAA is current FAA membership of their husbands and other members of their families. They also state **double burden and time scarcity** as vital obstacles for their participation in FAA events, activities, discussions, etc.

Touching the issue of their equal rights and opportunities within their families and community, non-member women share the same view with member women with regards to public participation and women's role within the family and society which affirms the existence of traditional stereotypes on gender issues within Armenian rural society.

Among women members 4 state employees were observed, the rest being involved mainly in non-paid work in various agricultural sectors such as crops, orchards, gardening, processing, animal husbandry etc.

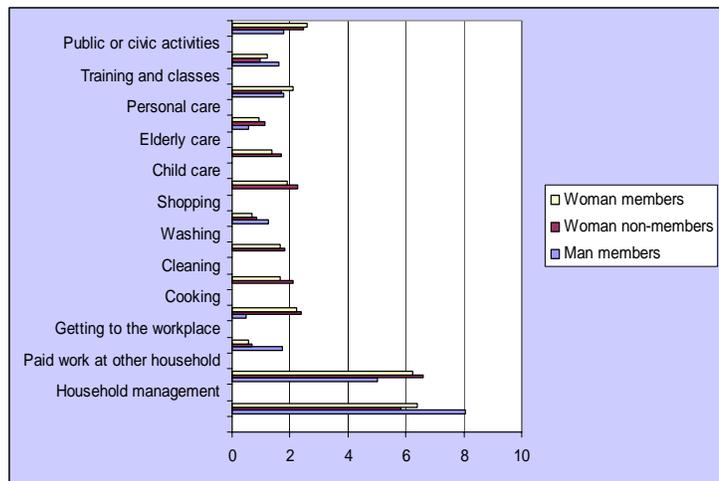
Non member women are 4 state employees were observed as well who simultaneously are involved in farm work of different sectors as well as in non-paid jobs in their household plots.

Men members are occupied both with paid and non-paid jobs in a range of agricultural spheres- planting, gardening, processing, agricultural services, household plot, animal husbandry. Among them 3 state employees are observed.

### **32. Time Distribution among Women and Men**

Majority of women members spend most of their time on household management while most of the women non members most of their time is busy with paid work at other households. Paid work at other households has taken the second priority in time schedule of women members. Household management is the second large scale task in the time schedule of women non members.

The third priority in both groups of women is given to free time: however, mentioning household management option most of the women had in mind all the house/ household related tasks, which include daily responsibilities like kitchen, cleaning, child care, etc. Cooking, cleaning and child care take the 4<sup>th</sup> priority in women’s time schedules within both women groups.



Source: Survey data

In comparison to women men spend most of their time on household management and paid work too, however, all other tasks like cooking, cleaning, washing, child care, etc. are absent from their time schedules opening possibilities and free time for public participation.

### **33. FAA Local Managers’ Attitude to Women’s Participation**

*As managers of local FAA branch offices’ interest to active involvement of women in decision-making and participation in FAA is present and managers’ attitude is quite positive.* One of the major causes mentioned by managers encouraging women’s participation is called “women’s high sense of discipline and responsibility.” Managers consider their involvement will ease organization of FAA activities, can raise effectiveness of the working process and, overall, will play positive role in FAAs’ further promotion.

### **Steps to encourage women's participation:**

- involvement of wives of migrant workers that left the country looking for employment
- information dissemination on FAA activities

Organization of meetings has been mentioned as a special measure encouraging women's participation. However, many women during face-to-face meetings mentioned that FAA is not known to them, and that no special measures are being taken to attract/interest women to participate in FAA.

Majority of managers mentioned 2 main results after women join FAA:

- increase of efficiency
- rapid organization of work

However, many women despite being FAA members are not currently active and do not express their opinions even while participating in discussions.

*Traditional mentality, workloads, time scarcity* are mentioned by local branch managers to be the main reasons for women's non-participation. Currently, participation of women is temporary or permanent during FAA activities, though managers' opinions did not coincide with the study findings which argue for passive participation of women.

### **34. Governments' View on Issues of Rural Women's Participation**

The issue of women's participation, their under-representation in the local self government bodies and on the top decision-making positions complement to the rural women's passive participation in FAA and other farmer organizations and on community level.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture expert Ms. Anahit Jilavyan, who is also member to inter-governmental working group on UN CEDAW, time –burden of women in general, and especially time burden among rural women, lot's of manual work done on the daily basis, isolation of the regions and farming households, absence of child-care facilities and other social services, and, most importantly, absence of awareness on their rights, legal frameworks and women's right protection mechanisms on local level devise but do not complete the whole situation of rural women in Armenia.

Thus increasing their role in the society, first of all on the community level and within farmer's organizations can assist to the formation of self-sustainable, organized and active community in the regions where women and men will enjoy benefits of partnership. In order to be able to create favorable environment for equal participation and partnership, women and men should accept the notion of gender equality working in a team with each other. Major capacity and skill building in this area is needed: special projects targeting women's

participation, capacity-building and development of women entrepreneurship are those necessary measures which can help overcome isolation and poverty, and create preconditions for sustainable development within the regions.

### **35. Summary of Findings**

1. *Low rate of personal income and absence of paid employment makes rural women extremely dependent, limits their possibilities for further advancement, vocational training/education and employment: extreme poverty, low incomes coupled with lack of infrastructure significantly hinders women's access to social, health care services and facilities.*
2. *Women FAA members are more independent in their households, and have three times more influence and initiative as compared with women non members.*
3. *Men has given quite a modest place to women as decision-makers regarding financial resources – around 11% only which means that women's status as an equal partner is not perceived. The role of women as decision-makers in the family with regards to property, financial assets and their management is quite low and is not viewed by men seriously.*
4. *Women's membership and participation in the public life plays significant role with regards to their status in the family and their role as individual decision-makers. Women from the non members group have shown significant dependency on man's role in the family coupled with acknowledgement of the men as main decision-makers. Almost half of the non member women see the men's role as the most significant vis-à-vis the household management. Only 12,1% of women non members make decisions regarding the household themselves.*
5. *To enable more favorable environment for rural women's participation it's necessary to start working with men and men's attitudes making them more gender-sensitive, advocating for women's equal rights and opportunities, as well as use the team-work approach and trainings/simulations targeting inclusion of women as equal decision-makers.*
6. *Women, especially non members, are not specifically informed about FAA events, or upcoming discussions, agendas, issues. In comparison to the women, men are free*

*from the housework which also plays a decisive role for high percentage of men's participation. No flexible schedules are arranged for general meetings which will allow women to be present and balance their workloads freeing some time for participation, events, trainings, consultancy, etc. provided by FAA.*

- 7. Women pointed on constrained behavior during the meetings which makes one think on stereotypical attitudes and non-attractive environment for women's participation. Men are public figures whose participation to the public life and community decision-making is considered to be natural, while "women's place is the house" attitudes exist in the whole rural community: this observation was received from majority of women and was confirmed with data received from both female and male participants of the study.*
- 8. The first most popular cause for non-participation was family problems, i.e. identifiable negative attitude of husband or other family members to the issue of participation. The second prevalence in the answers of non-member women has been given to the cause of non-confidence for women's participation because of the lack of relevant skills.*
- 9. Around half of the member and non member women consider themselves denied for equal rights and opportunities with men: this opinion is even more frequent within the women members and makes 48, 6%.*
- 10. During the face-to-face meetings women were not even sure what property do they owe: they consider men's property to be theirs too, but in case there was a need for decision-making with regards to that property, most of the women would give the power of decision-making to men. Thus, their right to ownership is formal, and even guaranteed under the national/international law, is not being used or implemented in reality.*
- 11. Non equal status of women members is confirmed by their limited access with regards to management/access to assets, agricultural production, financial resources/income, as well as land/property ownership. Around 20% of women members mentioned that decision-making powers and property/asset related decisions traditionally belong to the men which speaks about existence of strong stereotypical thinking on the role of women and men within the society and existence of adequate rights and models of "expected behavior" in studied communities.*

12. *To improve the situation of women major information/public awareness campaign on human rights, gender equality, mechanisms for participation and community mobilization, as well as capacity-building trainings are needed both for women and men of the mentioned rural communities. These measures would help to enable the passive sector of rural population and would stimulate participatory decision-making within communities and within FAA.*
13. *Majority of women and men did not have idea on gender equality, principles of equal rights and opportunities, as well as strongly differentiate women's and men's role within the rural community. No awareness exists on causes of discrimination and gender inequalities within their communities. This issue needs major capacity-building and awareness raising since both groups had very fuzzy understanding of gender, gender quality, women's rights and in general, human rights implementation mechanisms. Also, not a single person mentioned any national or international mechanisms or institutions preventing gender inequalities or promoting gender-sensitive strategies on national, regional or international levels.*
14. *Managers of local FAA branch offices are interested to active involvement of women in decision-making and participation in FAA is present and managers' attitude is quite positive however no specific actions are being undertaken to encourage women's participation in FAA.*

### **36. Action Plan**

#### **Sensitization of the FAA**

1. Gender sensitization of the FAA Head office, its staff, management through Gender mainstreaming and sensitization trainings, simulations, tools for gender analysis targeting analysis of FAA work plans,
2. Elaboration of gender strategy for FAA activities,
3. Gender assessment and analysis of the needs of female/male staff, their needs, current human, technical and financial resources available to ensure gender sensitization of FAA works, projects and activities, especially within the regions of Ararat, Armavir and Vayots Dzor,

4. Appointment of gender focal points within the head office and local FAA structures/organizations both on the central and local levels,
5. Establishment of the local Women Initiative Groups within the local rural communities and farmer co-operatives, including women members and non members,
6. Provision of capacity-building trainings and round-table discussions on gender awareness, women rights, women's leadership, as well as practical skills enabling women's community participation,
  - Gender awareness and gender mainstreaming policies and practices
  - Human rights focusing women's rights and development
  - Participation, leadership, community-mobilization
  - Computer skills including internet
  - Practical skills enabling women's community participation, including management, organizational skills, and strategic decision-making

#### Targeted Measures

1. Create live network of rural women from the FAA branches based on Women Initiative Groups in FAA co-operatives, including the Head office in Yerevan, local branches in Ararat, Armavir, and Vayots Dzor regions.
2. Organize regular meetings of the Women Initiative Groups, experience exchange, public events.
3. In a team with gender focal points from the FAA, create local information portal for women farmers
4. Create enabling conditions for women to encourage their participation in FAA: namely
  - Assistance in creation of child care facilities
  - Flexible schedules for FAA women members to fit into the general meetings organized by FAA
  - Dissemination of information on FAA activities, services, and opportunities resulting from membership within the large community groups of women in the mentioned regions
  - Decrease FAA membership fees for women members

- Give discounts for families which delegate their women representatives to participate in the FAA
5. Initiate discussions with rural women on the topics of FAA's possible assistance in farming, marketing of products, and making accessible women's access to education/vocational training, health care services, capacity-building.
  6. Organize meetings, conferences, trainings, study tours and experience exchange with regional partners, including farmer organizations, donors, rural women's groups.
  7. Organize FAA Rural Women's Annual Conference which will boost participation of women in FAA, will serve as a forum for discussion of projects, ideas, experiences.
  8. Start fund-raising for establishment of 4 regional women development centers. Centers will provide regular capacity-building, information dissemination on women's rights and gender, women entrepreneurship, organization of craft shops as well as social and cultural events, and will serve as a discussion/training facility for local women.
  9. Organize experience exchange with partner Farmer's organizations of Central/Eastern Europe and CIS to enable mutual co-operation projects on capacity-building.

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### **38. Annexes**

<b>Women members age</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
25-44	62.9
45-64	31.4
65 and more	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Women non member's age</b>	
18-24	6,1
25-44	57,6
45-64	36,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Men members age</b>	
18-24	3.8
25-44	34.6
45-64	53.8
65 and more	3.8
33	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Education**

	<b>Partial secondary</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>Higher</b>	
<b>Women members</b>	3	8.6%	28	80%	3	8.6%
<b>Women non members</b>	7	21.2%	23	69.7%	3	9.1%
<b>Men members</b>	4	15.4%	10	38.5%	12	46.2%

### **Marital Status**

	<b>Article I. arried</b>		<b>Single</b>		<b>Divorced</b>		<b>Widowed</b>	
<b>Women members</b>	29	82.9%	3	8.6%			3	8.6%
<b>Women non members</b>	26	78.8%	4	12.1%	1	3%	2	6.1%
<b>Men members</b>	23	88.5%	3	11.5%				

### **Age of marriage**

	<b>Till 15</b>		<b>16-20</b>		<b>21-25</b>		<b>25 and more</b>	
<b>Women members</b>	1	2.9%	23	65.7%	6	17.1%	2	5.7%
<b>Women non members</b>			19	57.6%	8	24.2%	2	6.1%
<b>Men members</b>			3	11.5%	12	46.2%	8	30.8%