

Gender Equality Profile in LDN/SLM for Kvareli Municipality, Georgia

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**“Generating Economic and Environmental Benefits from Sustainable Land
Management for Vulnerable Rural Communities of Georgia”**

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Methodology

Three methods of data procession have been used to maintain the gender profile of Kvareli municipality:

1. Information obtained from Kvareli municipality about gender policy and gender statistics
2. Official information of the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat)
3. Specially elaborated questionnaire, surveys carried out in the villages of the municipality

It is important to note that the National Statistics Office of Georgia keeps statistics only nation-wide, there are however some statistics on regional and municipal level as well, but there is hardly any statistics available on village level. As for the municipality itself, it hardly ever keeps gender disaggregated statistics. Therefore, elaboration of related gender profiles would have been impossible without additional surveys on the ground.

Gender assessment of the villages of Kvareli municipality has been carried out in November-December 2021. The field activities have been carried out by the representatives of Kvareli municipal Administration (Executive Body) in administrative units. Following the survey, the information about 21 villages of Kvareli municipality have been assessed and analyzed.

General Overview

Kvareli Municipality is located on the eastern border of Georgia and covers an area of 1,000 square kilometers (100,000 hectares).

The land use is distributed as follows: 14.2% permanent crop plantations (*mainly vineyards*), 9.3% arable land, 20.5% grassland, 52.9% forest land, and 3.1% other land types (*including water bodies, settlements, unused land, etc.*).



To the north, the terrain rises to the main ridge of the Greater Caucasus, which forms the state border with the Russian Federation.

The highest mountain in the area reaches an elevation of 3,117 meters.

Most settlements are located at the foot of the mountains.

The municipality is sparsely populated, with a population of 30,400 as of January 1, 2021.

Agriculture in Kvareli Municipality is primarily focused on viticulture.

Kvareli Municipality consists of one city (Kvareli) and 21 villages, which are organized into 11 administrative units (*formerly self-governing communities*).

Gender Equality Municipal Policies and Strategies

Kvareli Municipality Gender Equality Institutional Mechanism and Legal Framework

According to the resolution #19 of Kvareli municipal Sakrebulo, the Gender Equality Council of Kvareli municipality was established on September 25, 2017², which is chaired by the Head of Sakrebulo.

The Council is comprised of 11 members (8 male, 3 female), which consists of both the members of the Municipal Sakrebulo (*Legislative Body*) and the Municipal Administration (*Executive Body*). An NGO representative is also the member of the Council.

The Kvareli municipal Sakrebulo has adopted the Gender Equality action plan 2018-2019. No further action plan has been adopted in the municipality yet.

Municipal Service - Women's Room

The Women's room has been operating in the municipality since 2014.

A Women's Room was initially created as the municipal supporting service in order to support women and girls: to consult women and girls interested in services of Women's Room, provide them with the information needed and use children's corner for their children if necessary. A visitor may use the library, computers and internet.

The Women's Room is an open space for arranging meetings and different kind of educational-informative activities. Besides, the services of the Women's Room are available for everyone visiting the municipality, Women's Room services can be used not only by women and girls but by anyone in the municipality.¹

Women's Participation Decision-Making in Kvareli Municipality

Following the 2021 municipal elections, the new composition of the Council will be confirmed at the Sakrebulo session.

Although the women's representation has increased after the 2021 local self-government elections throughout Georgia, that has been resulted by the introduction of legislative gender quotas among others in Kvareli municipality, the number of male decision-makers both at the Kvareli municipal Sakrebulo and the Administration (Executive Body) significantly exceeds the number of female representatives.

Based on information provided by the municipal gender focal point (16/12/2021) out of the 27 members of Kvareli City Council 6 are female (22%), 21 are male (78%). The Head of Sakrebulo is a male, while his 2 deputies are male, 1 is a female. There are 11 persons holding political positions at the City Council out of which 2 are female (18%), 9 are male (82%).

There are 5 commissions at the Sakrebulo all of which are being chaired by men. The heads of factions are 1 male, 1 female. On the managerial position the head of Sakrebulo staff is 1 female.

There is a total of 8 public servant at the City Council, out of which 5 are female, while 3 are male, 1 professional servant is a male, 6 are female; out of those employed under the contract, 3 are male and none are female.

¹ ALSP (2017). Guidelines: How to Set Up a Municipal "Women's Room" and Improve Local Decision Making.
<https://alcp.ge/assets/pdf/old/a532bc13f59eb34c33346712849287c9.pdf>

Municipal Sakrebulo (Legislative Body)					
	Position	Women		Men	
1.	Member of Sakrebulo	6	22.2%	21	77.8%
2.	Opposition members of Sakrebulo	2	25.0%	6	75.0%
3.	Persons holding political positions	2	18.2%	9	81.8%
3.1	Head of Sakrebulo	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
3.2	Deputy Head of Sakrebulo	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
3.3	Head of commission	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
3.4	Head of faction	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
4.	Persons employed on managerial positions				
4.1	Chief of staff	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
4.2	Head of service	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4.3	Head of department	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
5.	Public servant	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
6.	Professional officer	6	85.7%	1	14.3%
7.	Person employed under labor contract	0	0.0%	3	100.0%

Table 1 Gender statistics of Sakrebulo members and employees

Kvareli municipal Mayor is a male, whose deputy is also a male. The total number of persons employed on managerial positions stands at 18 (10 males, 8 females), including the heads of service (6 males, 3 females) and heads of department (4 males, 5 females). The number of female public servants (specialists) at the Kvareli Administration (Executive Body) exceeds the number of men. Their overall number stands at 83 (38 males, 45 females). Meanwhile, the number of women employed under the contract exceeds the number of men. Out of 29 employees 13 are males, 16 are females.

Municipal Administration (Executive Body)			
	Position	Women	Men
1	Person holding political positions		
1.1	Mayor	0	1
1.2	Deputy Mayor	0	1
2	Persons employed on managerial positions	8	10
2.1	Chief of staff		
2.2	Head of service	3	6

2.3	Head of department	5	4
3	Public servant	45	38
4	Professional officer		
5	Person employed under labor contract	16	13
6	Person employed under administrative contract		

Table 2 Gender statistics of Administration (Executive Body) members and employees

Population

Following the 2014 census the overall number of population in Kvareli municipality stood at 29 827, including 14 728 (49.5%) men, 15 099 (50.6%) women.

Based on the information available at the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the number of population in Kvareli municipality as of January 1, 2021 stood at 30 400. Unfortunately, no related gender disaggregated data is available about the number of population in Kvareli municipality (Table #3).

Population of Kvareli municipality		Male		Female		Overall	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2014 census	Town	3730	48.2%	4009	51.8%	7739	26%
	Village	10998	49.8%	11090	50.2%	22088	74%
Overall		14728	49.4%	15099	50.6%	29827	100%
2021 January 1 census	Town	-	-	-	-	9000	30%
	Village	-	-	-	-	21400	70%
Overall		-	-	-	-	30400	100%

Table 3 Number of population in Kvareli municipality, Source: The National Statistics Office of Georgia

The number of people living in the town of Kvareli has slightly increased compared to 2014. However, again the majority (70%) of the population remains rural.

The majority of the population in Kvareli municipality is ethnic Georgian. There are few ethnic Ossetians, and other ethnicities.²

Based on the information provided by the Kvareli municipality in November 2021, the population in 21 villages of the 10 administrative units is 50% female, 50% male. (Table #4)

² Webpage of Kvareli municipality, <http://kvareli.gov.ge/en/node/387>

Gender disaggregation of rural population			
Number	Male		Female
	11259		11257
Overall		22516	
%	50%		50%

Table 4 Gender disaggregation of rural population, Source: Information provided by Kvareli municipality

Gender and age disaggregated information about the population in the villages of Kvareli municipality is available in a table below:

Distribution of rural population by age and sex																				
0-2 years			2-6 years			6-15 years			15-18 years			18-60 years			60-65 years			over 65		
male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
220	229	449	564	610	1174	1191	1090	2281	778	761	1539	5480	5260	10740	1335	1383	2718	1691	1924	3615
49.0%	51.0%		48.0%	52.0%		52.2%	47.8%		50.6%	49.4%		51.0%	49.0%		49.1%	50.9%		46.8%	53.2%	

Table 5 Gender and age disaggregated information about the population in the villages of Kvareli municipality

The information provided by the municipality coincides with the 2021 data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia with 5% margin of errors, therefore, it can be considered trustworthy.

The trend of decrease in population

The comparison of 2002 and 2014 census shows a 25.58% decrease in the number of population in Kvareli municipality. Following the data of 2002 census, the number of population in Kvareli municipality stood at 40,080³, while following the data of 2014 census, it stood at 29 827, pointing at a high level of internal and external migration from the municipality.

Internal migration

We obtained the data about internal migration from a survey based on a special questionnaire elaborated for the villages of Kvareli municipality.

Most people migrate from Kvareli to Tbilisi (75%) and Telavi (20%).

Migration is especially frequent from the 6 villages (Akhalsopeli, Tkhilistskaro, Kuchatani, Sanavardo, Sabue, Almati) of the municipality.

External migration

A vast majority of the population migrates abroad. The major target countries are Italy (24%), Greece (18%), Turkey (11%).

The vast majority (65%) of migrants are women, while men compose 35% of migrants.

³ Web page of Kvareli municipality. <http://kvareli.gov.ge/en/node/387>

Italy has been named the top target country of migration in 11 villages of the municipality, Greece – in 8 villages, Turkey – in 5 villages. Poland is one of the major target countries for 4 villages of Kvareli municipality, Russia – for other 4 plus 1 village which separately named Dagestan its major target in Russia.

The detailed data about the major target countries for migration for the villages of Kvareli municipality is available in table #6.

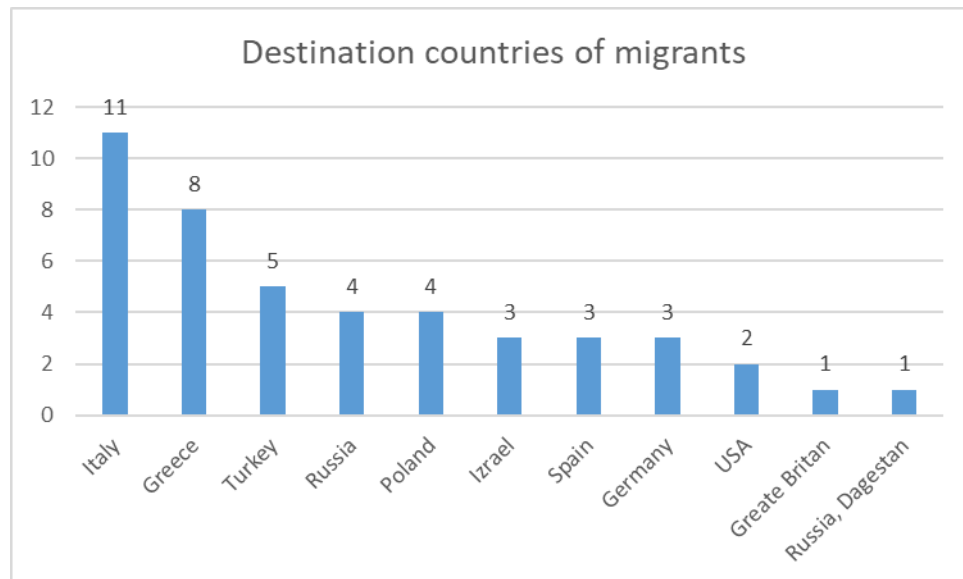


Chart 1 Major target countries for migration for the villages of Kvareli municipality

The table below contains the data about the migrants from Kvareli municipality to the target countries.⁴

	Italy	Greece	Turkey	Russia	Poland	Israel	Spain	Germany	USA	England	Russia (Dagestan in particular)
Per-centage	24%	18%	11%	9%	9%	7%	7%	7%	4%	2%	2%

Table 6 Target countries for migrants from the villages of Kvareli municipality

As a fact, women mainly leave for Italy, Greece and Turkey to find jobs, while men mainly leave for Poland.

Households

There is no data about the overall number of households available in the municipality either on the webpage of the National Statistics Office of Georgia or at the disposal of the municipality, it is even harder to receive gender disaggregated information about the heads of the households on the municipal level.

⁴ The table contains the data processed by the analyses of a questionnaire for Kvareli municipality.

The analyses of data from 11 villages based on the survey carried out by the representatives of the Administration (Executive Body) according to a specially elaborated questionnaire shows that out of the total of 1715 households 87.2% is run by men, while 12.8% are run by women.

Most likely the information about these 11 villages reflects the overall trend in the rest of the villages.

Infrastructure and Access to Services

Roads

Only 21.6% of the internal roads of the villages in Kvareli municipality have been covered with asphalt. The majority of roads in the villages are covered in gravel. (See Chart 2).

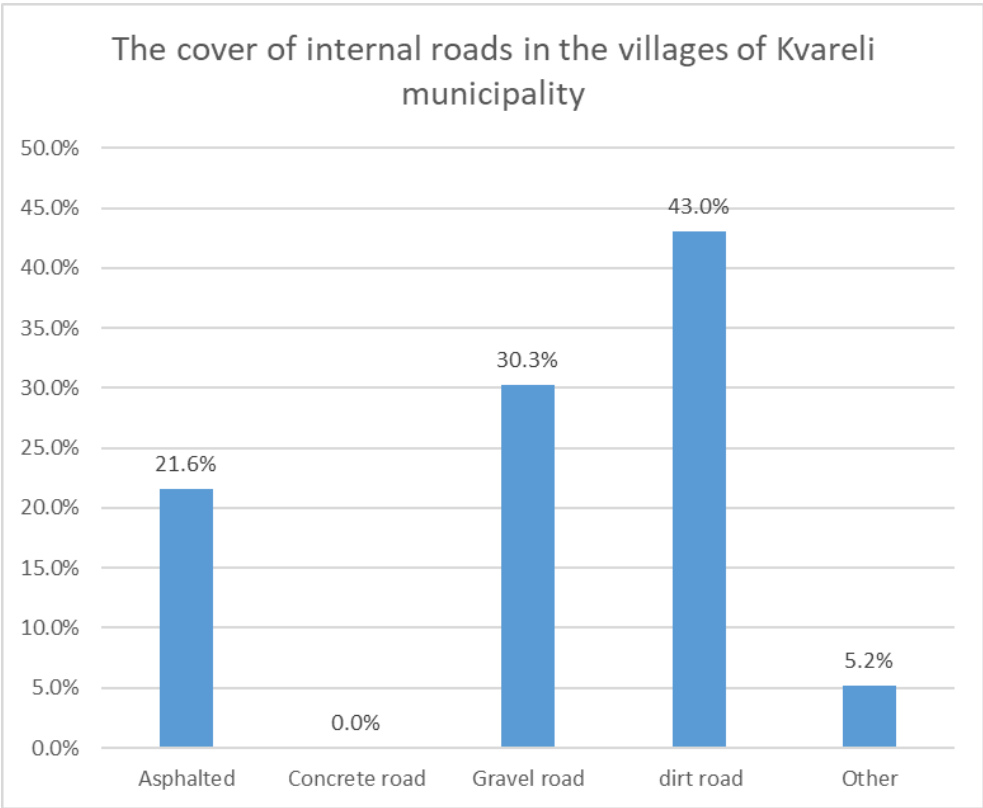


Chart 2 The cover of internal roads in the villages of Kvareli Municipality

The condition of the internal road infrastructure in the villages is mainly assessed as medium in 63% of the cases, as bad – in 32% of the cases, and good – in only 5% of the cases.

Drainage system is ensured in 56% of the internal roads, it is partly ensured in 22% of the cases, while in other 22% there is hardly any drainage system on the roads of the villages.

Outdoor lighting. Based on the information provided by the Administration (Executive Body) representatives in the administrative units of Kvareli municipality, 93% of the roads in the villages are equipped with outdoor lighting.

Transport

No municipal transport operates in Kvareli municipality. The population mainly uses private transport – micro buses, buses or private vehicles to travel and access various services.

The private transport available at the municipality – micro buses, buses – serve only 44% of the villages, while no private transport is available in 56% of the villages.

91.6% of the owners of the vehicles are male and 8.4% are female. The available data confirms that access for transport for women remains a serious challenge. The number of women who possess vehicles is much lower than the men. Nonexistence of municipal transport and lack of private vehicles, especially among the women, is a concern and a barrier preventing them from accessing other services (including healthcare, education, etc.).

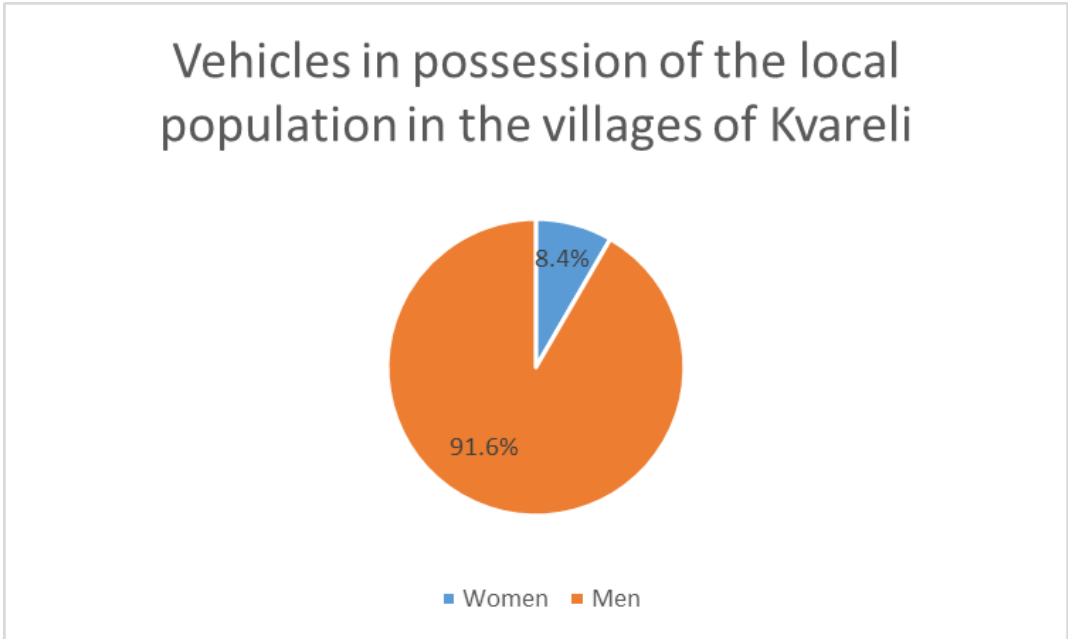


Chart 3 Vehicles in possession of the local population in the villages of Kvareli

Therefore, it is important to develop municipal transport, scheduled in line with the needs of the local population, especially women/girls. Proper, safe municipal transport would contribute to increasing higher mobility among women, access to healthcare services, improve the quality of life and give the local population more self-esteem.

Gasification and Alternative Energy

The absolute majority of the villages in Kvareli municipality, which represents 96% of the families, has access to natural gas.

Despite that the majority of the villages in the municipality have been gasified, the number of households which use natural gas for heating is still low as firewood remains the major source of heating there.

The population (on average 85%) has a limit to get 5-7 cubic meters of firewood from wood per family. The village of Gavazi is the only exception where the population gathers firewood in their neighborhood instead.

The fact that the families are still using firewood in winter despite the gasification, points at their low income, the families have no central heating or hot water, which would be more energy efficient, ecologically safe and alleviate the household workload of women.

It is important that part of the population uses sun batteries and biogas as alternative energy sources. Although the number of families using alternative energy is not that high, this is a positive trend anyway. Based on the information provided by the Kvareli municipality, 25% of the families in the village of Eniseli use bio gas, while 10% of the families use sun batteries, there are three other families in the village of Sabue and 6 families in the village of Almati.

Water Supply and Sewerage

Access to water is particularly important for women considering the huge burden of responsibilities primarily in the village: household activities, water supply, sanitation and hygiene, and the welfare of the family. Lack of access to qualitative, constant water supply decreases women's quality of life and negatively affects their health conditions. The issue has become even more important amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Although reportedly the drinking water is available for every household except for the villages of Chantliskuri, where 15% of families do not have access to drinking water, the villages of Kvareli municipality are facing the following water related challenges:

- 40% of the villages of Kvareli municipality receive water on schedule
- There is a frequent delay of quality water provision in 22% of the villages, while there is a periodical delay in 16% of the villages

Reduction of water debit has been named as the main reason for the delayed water provision, which is connected with:

- Weather conditions (drought in summer, freeze in winter),
- Usage of drinking water for irrigation (water is used for irrigation in 65% of the villages),
- Damage of the water pump station,
- Cutting of electricity.

Irrigation water is not at all available for 21% of the villages. In other villages it is partly available.

31.6% of the villages have water counters, but nevertheless the water usage is not calculated based on them.

38% of the villages receive drinking water via a pipeline. 24% of the villages have no water supply station ensuring fresh water.

The water distribution system is properly designed in 33% of the villages. In 6 villages the water distribution network is mainly arranged with polyethylene pipes, but in the rest of the villages the majority of water networks is outdated and needs to be replaced.

Water quality

The main water supply station is mainly protected except for four villages (Akhalsopeli, Grdzelichala, Sabue, Almati). In most cases the quality of water is being inspected from time to time. There have been no cases of

water intoxication. However, in certain cases the quality of water has deteriorated, which the Administration (Executive Body) representatives connect with the periodic electricity shortage, heavy rains, outdated networks.

Sewerage system

There is no sewerage system in any village of Kvareli municipality. Only a few families have arranged the sewerage system.

Waste Management/Cleaning

The situation is difficult concerning the waste management in the villages of the municipality. The population throws household rubbish in bins the number of which is not sufficient in the majority of the villages.

In 68% of the cases the garbage is being taken out of the villages once a week, in 30% of the cases – twice a week, while it is being taken out every day only in the village of Akhalsopeli.

No garbage is being taken out from the village of Satskheneti at all so that the locals throw the rubbish nearby the village.

In certain cases, the rubbish is being thrown in the gorges, slopes and rivers, which are not cleaned afterwards.

Women typically manage household waste.

It is important to improve municipal waste management policy/infrastructure, involvement of women in waste management and raise public awareness around this issue.

Education

Higher Education

A total of 5210 people, including 56% women and 44% men, have received higher education in the villages of Kvareli municipality.

Schools

Based on the information provided by the representatives of Kvareli municipal Administration (Executive Body), the number of school students is partially gender disaggregated.

Several representatives of Administration (Executive Body) failed to provide gender disaggregated information and only provided the overall number of the students, therefore, the information about 1368 students is not gender disaggregated.

The information about the students in other schools of Kvareli municipality is gender disaggregated. Based on this information there are 52% of boys and 48% of girls.

Based on the information provided, there are a total of 1445 students on the elementary level (742 boys, 703 girls), 609 on the basic level (319 boys, 290 girls), 398 – on the secondary level (215 boys, 183 girls) See Table #6.

Gender disaggregation of students in the village schools					
	Elementary level	Basic level	Secondary level	Total	%
Girls	703	290	183	1176	48%
Boys	742	319	215	1276	52%
Total	1445	609	398	2452	100%

Table 6 Gender disaggregation of students in the village schools

There is a total of 17 school in the villages of Kvareli municipality, three schools provide incomplete secondary education. There are no schools in three villages so the students go to the neighboring schools. The school bus is mainly available, however despite the need the students of Almati village, who go to the school of neighboring Sabue village, are not provided with bus.

88% of schools have been rehabilitated, 6% of schools are partly rehabilitated, while 12% of schools need to be repaired. The school infrastructure in most cases needs to be improved. The schools which have been recently rehabilitated have central heating, but 4 out of the 17 schools use firewood or electric heaters in winter.

Three schools do not have water supply in the building, but in the yard. A school in the village of Gavazi has delayed water provision.

The vast majority of schools use the local sewerage system. 11 schools out of the 17 schools of Kvareli municipality have well-equipped open playgrounds. There is no playground in one school, but it needs to be rehabilitated, while five schools have no playground at all. Sport halls in 11 schools are in good condition (however one of them needs to be equipped), three sport halls need to be rehabilitated, three schools have no sports halls at all.

Three out of 17 schools have no libraries, 2 schools do not have sufficient number of computers; at one of the schools, computers need to be repaired.

Kindergartens

The total number of children of kindergarten age in Kvareli municipality is 1174 (48% boys, 52% girls). See Table #7.

Number of children of kindergarten age		
Boys	Girls	Total
564	610	1174
48%	52%	100%

Table 7 Number of children of kindergarten age

There are 15 kindergartens in the villages of Kvareli municipality 8 out of which have nursery groups.

Wherever there are no kindergartens, the children go to neighboring villages which are 6-10 km away. No transport is available for kindergartens in comparison to the schools, except from 2 villages of Saruso and Tkhilistskaro.

In Kvareli municipality 31% of children of kindergarten age do not go to kindergarten, which is a rather high number. Most children do not go to kindergartens in the villages where there are no kindergartens; their families do not probably afford to take them to other kindergartens due to long distance amid the nonexistence of municipal transport; this problem is further deepened by nonexistence of municipal transport, lack of accessibility on private transport (only 8.4% of women possess cars in the municipality). It is also important to consider how much time women need to take their children to neighboring kindergartens and how to combine this with their household tasks.

Only 9 kindergartens are rehabilitated in the municipality, 5 are partially rehabilitated, while one needs to be repaired.

Although the municipality has been gasified, the vast majority of kindergartens, in particular 67% gets warm with a firewood stove in winter as only 33% of kindergartens are equipped with central heating.

Every kindergarten is provided with drinking water, but in certain cases water gathers in individual reservoirs. The kindergartens have separate sewerage system.

The kindergartens in Kvareli municipality are not properly equipped with toys and literature. Based on the information provided by the representatives of Administration (Executive Body), only 4 kindergartens are properly equipped, while the other 11 are equipped partly. Outdoor infrastructure, including playgrounds, is also a challenge as most of them are not properly arranged.

Free Time, Non-Formal Education, Culture and Sports

The infrastructure in the villages of the municipality is not properly arranged for cultural-cognitive or sport activities.

Libraries are open in only three villages, while libraries in two villages need to be entirely repaired and equipped.

There is no indoor sports hall in any village. There are instead open stadiums or other outdoor spaces on the territory of schools for sport activities.

The vast majority of sports stadiums are designated for football. In certain cases, there are stadiums for basketball and volleyball; there is one wrestling field as well.

Considering the gender stereotypes, the stadiums are mainly used by boys (89%), while there are only 11% of girls among the users of outdoor stadiums.

The small number of girls involved in sport, mainly play volleyball wherever possible. It is important to ensure other alternative spaces in the village enabling girls/women to play sport. This includes gyms, which are available in 4 villages only.

Free time and space

There are certain areas in the village centers or other districts where the locals usually gather to talk called “Birzha”. People socialize in churches and mosques as well. Locals are gathering in a house of culture only in the village of Shilda. Also in Shilda and Tsitskanaantseri people choose village squares for social gatherings.

To celebrate festive events people mainly gather in churches and at their own homes. The main celebrations include New Year and religious days, including Christmas, Easter, Virgin Mary Day (Mariamoba), St. George Day (Giorgoba), etc.

Girls/women and boys/men have different opportunities to spend their free time.

The representatives of Administration (Executive Body) say that men mainly spend their free time at the so-called “Birzha” where they talk, feast and have fun, they also play dominoes, cards, watch TV and surf the internet. Men spend their free time at home only in 2 villages.

The representatives of Administration (Executive Body) consider that women have a different understanding of free time: they mainly do the housework, stay home, watch TV and in rare cases spend their time talking with one another, visit neighbors or friends, surf the internet.

Practically, women spend their free time at home, doing household tasks and they rarely visit neighbors/friends or surf the internet, which supposedly is limited to using Facebook.

Based on the data provided, the attitudes of the representatives of Administration (Executive Body) are in line with the publicly rooted gender stereotypes about the work and leisure of women and men.

Healthcare, Access to Healthcare Services

Primary Healthcare

The locals of the villages in Kvareli municipality receive primary healthcare at the village ambulance from a family doctor and a nurse.

Out of the 20 villages there are hospitals in 7 villages only so that the locals receive healthcare services in the neighboring villages. The representatives of Administration (Executive Body) positively assess the infrastructure at the village hospitals but in two villages they need to be repaired.

Nonexistence of municipal transport causes barriers to locals to freely enjoy the healthcare services they need. This is a challenge for people with disabilities and pensioners in particular, who find it difficult to travel on their own or have insufficient health conditions to visit the hospitals.

Ambulance service, which is available in every village, is positively assessed, but timely service remains a challenge.

There are pharmacies only in 8 villages out of a total of 19. The remaining 11 villages use pharmacies in the nearby regional districts or neighboring villages.

There are no screening programmes available in 18 villages and the locals go to Gurjaani, Telavi and Tbilisi to receive the service.

Women living in the municipality give birth in district center – in Kvareli, but most often in Telavi. However, based on the information provided by the Administration (Executive Body) representatives, in the village of Saruso, women give birth either in a hospital in Telavi or at home. Giving birth at home points at the lack of accessibility and/or low awareness and deeply-rooted social norms and ill practices, which need to be further studied.

The long distance to hospitals, lack of accessibility on transport, social norms and gender stereotypes reduce women's access to quality healthcare services. Particular attention should be paid on active involvement of rural women in screening programs, in order to eradicate the practice of home delivery, as well as to increase the access of people with disabilities and pensioners on preventive interventions from a family doctor and a nurse at the hospitals.

Jobs and Income

Agriculture is the main income for the locals of Kvareli municipality (67%), livestock for 29% while only 4% has paid income.

In the villages of Kvareli municipality viticulture is considered most profitable (52%), followed by growing fruit (22%), horticulture/gardening (13%), livestock (13%), beekeeping (4%).

83% of Administration (Executive Body) representatives considers that rural tasks are equally distributed between women and men; 6% says men are mainly involved in viticulture, while 6% considers that horticulture is mainly women's responsibility.

Considering that viticulture is believed to be the most profitable rural activity in Kvareli municipality, we can assume that women earn less than men. In horticulture, which mainly involves women, the overall size of the gardens is relatively small (0.159 ha) considering that 70% of the population possesses 1-5 hectares of land, while the other 30% - less than 1 hectare.

The main fruits and vegetables produced in the municipality include cucumber (22%), tomato (22%), beans (10%), pepper (10%), potato (9%), onion (6%), Bulgarian pepper (6%), garlic (5%), herbs (4%), watermelon (1%), cabbage (1%), melon (1%), corn (1%). Horticultural products satisfy 63% of the demands of the families.

Agronomic services are available for 35% of the villages. Irrigation is available for 50% of the villages; in 25% of the villages it is partly available, while in the other 25% of the villages it is not available at all.

Population receives information about the modern technologies from the internet (47%), training (33%), mobile text messages (7%); 13% has no opportunity to receive the news and to deepen the knowledge.

The Administration (Executive Body) representatives say the monthly income of the rural population is rather low and ranges between GEL 200 to 600. Monthly income of women and men differs. Representatives of Administration (Executive Body) consider that the income of men exceeds the income of women to some extent. Considering that almost 100% of the Administration (Executive Body) representatives are male, the opinion might be subjective, thus the difference between the income may be even larger (based on the data of the National statistics Office of Georgia, in 2020, the gender pay gap stood at 32.4% in Georgia).

It is also noteworthy that as a large portion of labor migrants are women (65%), the share of their remittances to their families is significant.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in SLM and LDN

Gender Equality in International Rankings - National Perspective on Georgia

Georgia has made positive steps in elaborating and implementing a gender equality strategy and has adopted number of international commitments. However, there is an overall consensus that greater efforts are needed to ensure gender equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. Georgia ranked 61st of 189 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI) 2020⁵, falling in the category of countries with 'very high human development'. The HDI is an internationally comparable measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: health, knowledge and living standards. Georgia's HDI ranking has experienced steady progress, rising by seven places since 2014. Its HDI value of 0.812 is below the average of 0.898 for countries in the very high human development category, and above the average of 0.791 for countries in Europe and Central Asia. In terms of the ranking of other neighbouring countries, the HDI 2020 places Georgia ahead of Azerbaijan (which ranks 88th), Armenia (81st) and Ukraine (74th), but behind Russia (52nd), Belarus (53rd) and Turkey (54th).

The Gender Development Index (GDI)⁶ measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men in the three basic dimensions of human development. The GDI is the ratio of the HDIs calculated separately for females and males using the same methodology as in the HDI.

The female HDI 2020 value for Georgia is 0.800, compared to the male HDI value of 0.817, resulting in a GDI value of 0.980. As a result, the country is placed in Group 1. Country groups are based on absolute deviation from gender parity in the HDI. This means that the grouping takes into consideration inequality in favour of men or women equally.

On the Gender Inequality Index 2020 (GII)⁷, Georgia ranks 76th of 162 countries, with a GII value of 0.331. The GII measures gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development – reproductive health (measured by the maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent birth rate), empowerment (measured by the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women and the proportion of adult women and men aged 25 and older with at least some secondary education) and economic status (measured by the labour force participation rate of the female and male populations aged 15 and older). The GII is built on the same framework as the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) to highlight differences in the distribution of achievements between women and men. It measures the human development costs of gender inequality. Thus, the higher the GII value, the more disparities between women and men, and the more the loss to human development.

On the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2021⁸, Georgia ranks 49th of 156 countries and has a value of 0.731 (with '0' corresponding to imparity and '1' to gender parity). The index shows that Georgia's position has improved in terms of its overall ranking, rising from 54th place in 2006. However, its performance

⁵ UNDP (2020). Human Development Report 2020 /UNDP, New York, 2020.

<https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr2020.pdf>

⁶ UNDP (2020). Gender Development Index 2020 /UNDP, New York, 2020.

<https://hdr.undp.org/gender-development-index#/indicies/GDI>

⁷ UNDP (2020). Gender Inequality Index 2020 /UNDP, New York, 2020.

<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

⁸ World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021 /WEF, Cologny, 2021.

https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

has deteriorated on some of the components of the Global Gender Gap Index, such as economic participation and opportunity. In terms of these areas, Georgia ranked 64th of 156 countries in 2021, compared to 41st of 115 countries in 2006. The country's performance on educational attainment also deteriorated (from 28th place in 2006 to 30th in 2021), as did its performance on political empowerment (from 59th place in 2006 to 60th in 2021). However, its performance in terms of health and survival has significantly improved – rising from 115th place in 2006 to 50th place in 2021. In terms of regional comparisons, Georgia ranks 12th on the index 26 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Women in Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship - National, Regional, and Local Contexts

The share of rural population in the total population of the country was 42% for 2017. It was reduced by 1% to 41% by 2020, and it is 40.6% in 2021⁹. By 2019, agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounted for 7.4% of gross domestic product (GDP)¹⁰.

Nationwide problem of land fragmentation is particularly acute in the agricultural sector. The issuance of loans is hindered by various factors in practice. Fragmentation of agricultural lands is high, which makes small enterprises risky. Commercial credit organizations, on the other hand, focus on large farmers as usual.¹¹

However, when state programs require land beneficiaries to own land, women are in a doubly disadvantaged position because they either do not own land at all or own little land.

According to GeoStat¹², there is still a radical imbalance between men and women in the percentage of agricultural land distribution. According to 2017 data, this figure was 17.9% for women and 82.1% for men; In the following years, these figures have changed slightly. Namely, in 2018, the area of land used for agriculture was 19% for women and 81% for men, while in 2019, women owned 19.8% and, consequently, man owned 80.2%. In 2020, this figure was 20.7% for women and 79.3% for men.

Recent studies show that rural people are significantly more prone to poverty. However, these risks are equally characteristic of men and women. The poverty rate for women and girls was highest in 2018 at 23.3%, although it was 23.0% for men as well. According to the regions, women and girls living in rural regions are more prone to poverty compared to women and men living in capital city of Tbilisi, who are at the lowest risk of poverty.¹³

In Georgia, a man is traditionally considered to be the head of the household. Accordingly, the share of male-headed households exceeds 60 percent.

Household total income and expenditures as well as poverty indicators do not reveal gender differences among male- and female-headed households. However, gender differences are revealed through an analysis of certain categories of household incomes and expenditures. Incomes from wages, self-employment and selling

⁹ GeoStat (2021). Population of Georgia by Regions and Self-Governed Units in 1994-2021 (as of 1 January for each year). [online]: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/41/population>

¹⁰ GeoStat (2021) - <https://www.geostat.ge/en>

¹¹ European Union (2021). Gender Equality in Georgia in GAP II Priority Areas: Country Review // EU 4Gender Equality: Reform Help Desk” project, funded by the European Union and implemented by NIRAS.

https://georgia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/gender_eng_part_2.pdf

¹² GeoStat (2021). *Women and Men in Georgia / Statistical Publication, Tbilisi, 2021.*

https://www.geostat.ge/media/41855/WOMEN-AND-MEN-IN-GEORGIAN_-2021.pdf

¹³ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.

<https://dspace.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

agricultural production are higher for households where the head is male, while incomes from property leasing, interest on deposit and money received as a gift are higher for households where the head is female. In case of expenditures, expenses on agriculture and property acquirement are higher for households where the head is male, while expenses on health care and clothing and footwear are higher for households where the head is female. Women are less likely to be employed, and their salary/earnings is lower in almost every economic sector - especially in agriculture.

The most recent data of 2021¹⁴ show that the number of men founding businesses is almost twice as high as the number of women in the same category. In terms of the economic sectors, a relatively small number of women business owners are found in the mining industry, construction, transport and warehousing, and agriculture. On the other hand, the number of female owners is much higher than the number of male owners in areas of activity such as education, health and social services and other services.

The Government Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2020¹⁵ sets out certain commitments that the State has made to strengthen the economic participation of women living in villages; The Action Plan also sets out a commitment to ensure equal access to agricultural land and real estate. It should be noted, however, that the projects implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture did not include a gender component. As various reports point out, obtaining agro-credits by women is still a challenge as it involves owning land and other property.

Rural women also have less access to information that includes support for agriculture and manufacturing. It should also be noted that the indicators for the 2020 task of the 2018-2020 Action Plan of the Rural Development Strategy of Georgia¹⁶, as well as newly approved Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027 and its Action Plan for 2021-2023¹⁷, take into account the gender perspective, but, actually, in substantially general priority areas, for example, these action plans aim to raise awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship and to encourage collaboration by promoting skills development and employment (especially for young people and women); The plans also emphasize the importance of increasing the involvement of the population (especially women and youth) in identifying local needs and ways to address them. However, these measures are not sufficient to meet the needs and interests of women and girls living in villages; They also fail to strengthen them economically as these measures are not supported by appropriate effective mechanisms, including the obligation to implement gender budgeting in local municipalities.

The Law on Gender Equality of Georgia¹⁸ does not oblige relevant agencies to provide gender budgeting, gender impact assessment or gender audit and appropriate reporting. Consequently, without these tools, the needs of

¹⁴ GeoStat (2021). *Women and Men in Georgia / Statistical Publication, Tbilisi, 2021.*

https://www.geostat.ge/media/41855/WOMEN-AND-MEN-IN-GEORGIAN_-2021.pdf

¹⁵ Government of Georgia (2019). Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2020,

<https://myrights.gov.ge/en/plan/Human%20Rights%20Action%20Plan%20for%202018-2020>

¹⁶ Government of Georgia (2017). Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2017-2020 and its Action Plan for 2018-2020.

<https://eu4georgia.eu/wp-content/uploads/Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2017-2020.pdf>

¹⁷ Government of Georgia (2019). Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027 and its Action Plan for 2021-2023.

<https://eu4georgia.eu/wp-content/uploads/Agriculture-and-Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2021%E2%80%932027.pdf>

¹⁸ Gender Equality Act (2010) // Law of Georgia on Gender Equality of 26 March, 2010 (*Official Gazette of Georgia – Legislative Herald of Georgia (LHG)*, web-page: matsne.gov.ge, Ref.: 2844-Is, Registration Code No. 010.100.000.05.001.003.962 - [Unofficial Translation in English]

<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/91624>

women and girls living in villages are difficult to be fully reflected in relevant strategies or state and local programs implemented in Kvareli Municipality.

The above programs are implemented by the Rural Development Agency which is operating within the system of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA). It has to be noted that, until June 1, 2019, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA) maintained a presence at the municipal level through its territorial bodies, specifically:

- *Municipal Information-Consultative Agricultural Centers*, which were directly subordinated to MEPA.

At the regional level, MEPA was represented by:

- *Regional Agricultural Offices*, which were likewise directly subordinated to MEPA.

It is also important to note that the Municipal Information-Consultative Agricultural Centers operated independently and were not subordinated to the Regional Agricultural Offices.

As of June 1, 2019, both the Information-Consultative Agricultural Centers and the Regional Agricultural Offices were merged into the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA), operating under the control of the MEPA. In 2020, this agency was renamed the *Rural Development Agency (RDA)*¹⁹. Following this reorganization, these centers became territorial units of the RDA.

At present, Agricultural Information-Consultative Centers - informally referred to as agricultural extension centers or extension services - are established in each municipality (incl. Kvareli Municipality) and are directly subordinated to the RDA. Their primary role is to provide agricultural extension services to farmers and to disseminate information on ongoing and planned agricultural and rural development programs. These centers offer a range of services, including in-office consultations, remote support, and on-site field visits. In addition, extension officers conduct rural outreach activities, including farmer training sessions and informational meetings.

In parallel, the RDA implements government-funded programs and projects initiated by the MEPA. These initiatives are financed through the state budget and are aimed at fostering sustainable rural development and enhancing the link between rural and urban areas. The RDA's mission includes integrating traditional agricultural knowledge with modern innovations to support rural prosperity. Furthermore, the RDA is responsible for managing and developing the national farm and farmer registry system.

In addition, there is established **the Multistakeholder Municipal Land Degradation (LD) Working Group of Kvareli Municipality**. The Working Group was established in 2019 by order of the Mayor of Kvareli Municipality as a multi-stakeholder advisory platform aimed at addressing the pressing issue of land degradation within the municipality. The formation of the group aligns with national and international efforts to promote sustainable land management (SLM), land degradation neutrality (LDN) and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) as effective strategies for improving agricultural resilience, ensuring environmental sustainability, and enhancing rural livelihoods.

The establishment of the Working Group was catalyzed by a broader initiative supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and implemented under the

¹⁹ <https://www.rda.gov.ge/en>.

auspices of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA) through the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus).

Core Functions of the Working Group Include:

- Providing expert advice and recommendations to the Mayor of Kvareli Municipality on land degradation issues;
- Identifying priority areas and strategic objectives for achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN);
- Supporting the planning and implementation of SLM and CSA measures;
- Facilitating stakeholder coordination for project implementation;
- Promoting awareness, capacity building, and knowledge exchange among local communities.

Crucially, the Working Group operates as a multi-stakeholder coordination platform at local (municipal) level, bringing together representatives from:

- Local government (municipal administration);
- Central government agencies and their municipal branches;
- The Office of the State Representative (Governor);
- Academic and research institutions;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Subject-matter experts.

There are 14 members on the Working Group, of whom only 5 are women. In this regard, it is recommended that the composition of the Working Group be expanded to include more women in order to achieve a reasonable gender balance.

Currently, the following nationally supported programs are available and have the potential to contribute to the implementation of SLM/LDN approaches in the rural municipalities of Georgia, including Kvareli Municipality:

*Preferential Agrocredit Program*²⁰: Preferential Agrocredit Program was initiated by the MEPA and is supported by the central state budget funds. The purpose of the Program is to improve the processes of primary agricultural production, processing, storage and sale by providing the legal and natural entities with cheap, affordable long-term and preferential funds. Estimated allocations²¹ under the above *Preferential Agrocredit Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 12 million in total.

*Agroleasing Program*²²: Agroleasing Program is managed by the MEPA and is supported by the central state budget funds. The program serves for the development of the agricultural products' added value generating infrastructure. Preferential agroleasing are benefited by the companies, involved in creation of the agricultural products (modern farms, greenhouse, etc.) or engaged in any form of processing of agricultural products (storage, packaging, recycling), or producing packaging materials for the agricultural products, as well as the companies, which have approved the state co-financing within scopes of the co-financing Program. Estimated allocations²³

²⁰ https://rda.gov.ge/programs/read/aqro_credit/5:parent/

²¹ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

²² https://rda.gov.ge/programs/read/aqro_credit/9:child/

²³ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

under the above *Agroleasing Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 5 million in total.

*Produce in Georgia Program*²⁴: The Agricultural component of the program 'Produce in Georgia' is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD) and the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA) and is supported by the central state budget funds. This includes co-financing of agricultural primary production and processing by the state, inter alia, for high-technology greenhouses of vegetables, berries, herbs and mushrooms; production of seedlings and saplings; gardens, vineyards, plantations of perennial crops; processing fruits, berries, vegetables, mushrooms, citrus etc. Estimated allocations²⁵ for agricultural part of the above *Produce in Georgia Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 40 million in total.

*Plant The Future Program*²⁶: *Plant The Future Program* is managed by the MEPA and is supported by the central state budget funds. Co-financing will be carried out in two separate components of the program: a) component of co-financing perennial gardens (hereinafter referred to as 'gardens' component') and b) co-financing component of the nursery gardens. One of the objectives of the program is support of the local, high-quality, phytosanitary clean planting material (seedlings) production, which will make possible for individuals interested in creating modern, intensive cultivated gardens, offer cheap, local materials for planting compare to imported ones. Estimated allocations²⁷ under the above *Plant The Future Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 25 million in total.

*Young Entrepreneur Program*²⁸: Young Entrepreneur Program supports young entrepreneurs in rural area desiring to conduct a business activity in Georgia. The program is managed by the MEPA and is supported by the Denmark International Development Agency (DANIDA). Program aims at Promoting of development of young entrepreneurs; Investing in value chains of the agricultural products. Estimated allocations²⁹ under the above *Young Entrepreneur Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 15 million in total.

*Agro Processing and Storage Enterprises Program*³⁰: Agro Processing and Storage Enterprises Program is initiated by the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA) with financial support from the state budget. The target area of the program covers all rural municipalities of Georgia. Estimated allocations³¹ under the above *Agro Processing and Storage Enterprises Program* for 2021-2024 will be UD\$ 16 million in total.

In 2020, UN Women published the Gender Equality Profile of Georgia, which included, among other topics, sex-disaggregated indicators for small-scale food producers in Georgia, in accordance with SDG Indicators (see Table 8 below).

²⁴ http://rda.gov.ge/programs/read/agro_credit/10:child/

²⁵ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

²⁶ http://rda.gov.ge/programs/read/plant_future/2:parent/

²⁷ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

²⁸ <http://danida.arda.gov.ge/quest/about>

²⁹ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

³⁰ <http://rda.gov.ge/programs/read/grant/6:parent/>

³¹ Estimation is based on approved average annual amount for 2021, however this amount could be substantially increased in post pandemic period.

Table 8 Small-scale food producers by sex status - according to SDG indicators (Source: UN Women, 2020³²)

Indicator	Data
Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (SDG indicator 2.3.2)	Data not available
Average monthly income of agricultural population by household from employment or the sale of agriculture products (country-specific indicator 2.3.2.1)	GEL 445 in 2018 (combining income from wages, self-employment and the sale of agricultural products) 43 per cent of the agricultural population produces goods for sale, with an average monthly income of GEL 313.30. However, the distribution is highly positively skewed; therefore, reporting a median income of GEL 133.30 is more appropriate.
(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (SDG indicator 5.a.1)	Of the total landowners, 62.3 per cent are men and 37.7 per cent are women. 81 per cent of land is owned by men; 19 per cent, by women. In 2016, women owned 28.2 per cent of the agricultural lands; 10 per cent of the farming land under lease; and 17 per cent of the total farming land (including under lease). Considering ownership by tenure type, women own 19 per cent of the land that has legal ownership or is in legal owner-like possession; 11 per cent of the land that is rented out; and 18 per cent of the land that is operated with a long-term lease (no possession).
Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services (SDG indicator 1.4.1)	14.3 per cent of the rural population does not have access to drinking water on their premises. Collection of drinking water is almost equally divided between men and women (aged 15 and above): 50.6 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. About 77.6 per cent of the rural household population is satisfied with water quality. The piped sewer system is available for 15.8 per cent of rural households.
Access to kindergartens	23.3 per cent of children living in rural areas (aged 36-59 months) do not attend kindergartens.
Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population (SDG indicator 13.1.1)	Between 2011 and 2015, the average death rate attributed to natural disasters was 0.2 per cent.

A number of issues were highlighted in conjunction with the above data. Namely, two thirds of the labour force in rural areas is employed in agriculture. The table's data on land ownership by sex point to only a slightly disproportional ownership; however, considering land size, women are in a disadvantaged position, which is also reflected in the economic inactivity in villages.

Women and men are equally involved in farming, with men spending 98.1 days and women 84.3 days per year in the crops value chain, while men spend 165.8 days and women 259.9 days in the animal husbandry value chain. Taking care of domestic animals and producing dairy products heavily depend on problematic water and gas supplies; this is probably one of the reasons for the long hours spent on animal husbandry.

³² UN Women (2020). Gender Equality Profile of Georgia / Authors: Nino Javakhishvili, Tamar Tskhadadze, Maia Barkaia, Lika Jalagania (Gender Research Center and D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology, Ilia State University) and Nani Bendeliani (UN Women Georgia). <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Georgia/Attachments/Publications/2020/Country%20Gender%20Equality%20Profile%20of%20Georgia.pdf>

Indeed, rural women have limited access to basic services, as indicated in the preceding table. These shortages affect women as they are the main caretakers of family members and, thus, use water for everyday household activities such as cooking, washing and cleaning; quite frequently, women wash in cold water to save family expenses.

Waste disposal is a problem for many households without a car. Such situations for rural women may hamper their income-generating activities, as women with limited access to basic services spend much more time and effort on household chores and have less time for other income-generating activities, not to mention free time. The lack of kindergartens - or the poor conditions or long distances of existing ones - leave almost no chance for women with small children to find the opportunity to work.

The shortage of basic supplies pushes the rural population to collect firewood for heating, which, in turn, affects the environment. Mainly poor and elderly women collect non-timber resources, such as mushrooms and berries; a consequence of deforestation is the additional foraging time and effort required of those who rely on forests for firewood, fodder and other non-timber forest products. The lack of transport - and thus the need to walk long distances - is another problem for women who use forest resources. In addition, road construction might create some adverse impacts on the local population, such as excessive dust causing health problems in children and more time spent on cleaning for women, who usually care for the children and take them to see a doctor.

Environmental challenges, including climate change and the risk of landslides, floods, fires and droughts, affect women and men differently. As women are mainly responsible for housework, they are less ready to react quickly to natural disasters. Women and children are 14 times as likely as men to die during disasters. The most vulnerable groups are inhabitants of high mountainous regions and rural areas, poor people and those living below the poverty line, and people living alone.

In addition, some women are victims of varying forms of domestic violence; in the case of economic violence, for example, husbands forbid their wives to work. Other victim women and their children are in need of shelters and crisis centres; however, these are not always accessible. Crisis centres are very limited in number and geographical scope. Rural women have limited access to economic opportunities, like starting their own business or being employed in a highly rewarded position; in addition, they face barriers to taking out loans and borrowing credit as they lack their own income or property.

Not being a landowner creates the additional risk of being excluded from village development programmes and, correspondingly, from decision-making processes. The same holds for IDPs and ethnic minority women. Because of traditional gender stereotypes, women are not entitled to decision-making in public activities; rural women rarely participate in decision-making affecting their own village or town's development, including environmental issues.

Small and medium-sized enterprises provide the main source of economic growth and employment in countries with market economies. During the third quarter of 2018, the share employed in this type of business constituted 63 per cent of the entire employed population in Georgia. Women-owned enterprises were few; beyond that fact, women face problems selling their products as they cannot compete with large food producers, in addition to lacking food-keeping facilities.

The main problem for rural women as well as the rural population is the lack of income and lack of income-generating activities. This, in turn, exacerbates their careless approach to environment protection, which also arises from a lack of awareness on environmental issues. Women are in a disadvantaged position because of their submissive role in families and societies, lacking a voice in decision-making processes in their own

communities. Family responsibilities as dictated by traditional gender roles further impede women's economic and decision-making activities in villages.

Earlier, in 2016, UN Women also published sex-disaggregated data and analyses in terms of gender differences in access to productive resources for agriculture within a regional context³³, including for the Kakheti region (see Table 9), where Kvareli Municipality is located.

Table 9 Problems related to Land Cultivation in Kakheti Region (Source: UN Women, 2016)³⁴

Problem Description	Rating (%)
None	15.0%
Agricultural land shortage	2.4%
There is not enough land cultivation equipment available in the region/need to wait	17.4%
Land cultivation equipment is outdated (modern equipment is not available)	1.7%
Rental of land cultivation equipment is too expensive	32.0%
Fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and other chemicals are not available in the region	4.0%
Fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and other chemicals are too expensive	42.4%
Available fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and other chemicals are not of the desired quality	4.1%
Qualified agronomists consultation is not available in the region	0.8%
Limited access to irrigation water	46.7%

A large part of the surveyed population in Kakheti region (incl. in Kvareli Municipality) experienced financial difficulties - this may be influenced or worsened by restricted access to productive resources, knowledge and expertise. A vast majority of the population produced small quantities of agricultural products; just enough for household consumption, or even less. Access to irrigation water, and to a smaller extent, access to agricultural land were the key challenges in the most municipalities of the region.

Access to land cultivation equipment, fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides were also highly problematic in the most municipalities (incl. Kvareli Municipality) of the region, mainly due to relatively high costs. About 30% of the population had additional income from non-agricultural activities, however, it was small, and women earned half of what men earn. Many focus group respondents indicated a wish to have a permanent job outside of the agricultural sector, as the latter is less stable. They did not plan to expand farming nor improve their agricultural/farming knowledge and/or skills. Only 1.4% of the surveyed population had used extension services, and a limited number of Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges offered agricultural education.

³³ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.
<https://dspace.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

³⁴ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.
<https://dspace.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

Gender stereotypes might further prevent women from getting agricultural training, and fewer women than men were aware of what the extension services offered. While agricultural cooperatives might be a path to increased production, very few respondents were involved in cooperatives, and women constituted only 25% of the cooperatives membership base.

Gender Differences in Access to Productive Resources

Women and men are differently affected by difficulties in access to resources in the most municipalities (incl. Kvareli Municipality) of the region. This finding is based on the survey and focus group data³⁵: According to the survey data, about 90% of the population in the target region - Kakheti - experienced financial difficulties.

As the survey data showed, respondents identified challenges in relation to **land cultivation**, however the main challenges reported varied across the most municipalities (incl. Kvareli Municipality) of the region. Overall, access to irrigation water, and to a smaller extent access to agricultural land appeared to be key challenges in the most municipalities (incl. Kvareli Municipality) of the region.

The shortage of agricultural land was comparatively lowest in Kakheti region. Access to land cultivation equipment was also a challenge in the most municipalities of the region, primarily due to high costs, but also due to waiting periods for accessing the equipment. Few respondents reported that the land cultivation equipment available was outdated, however, in Kakheti 10-15% of respondents reported that this equipment was not available at all. Access to fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and other chemicals was also problematic due to high costs. Kvemo Kartli respondents identified this problem to the lowest extent (5.1%). Access to qualified agronomist consultations and the availability of a labor force were reported as challenges only by very few respondents, while access to markets was identified.

Access to markets is complicated because of: a) bad roads (although the main roads are in a good condition, secondary roads in villages are underdeveloped); and b) a lack of money for transport and for renting stalls to sell products in the markets. Finally, access to irrigation water was reported by 35% to almost 50% in Kakheti region.

No statistically significant differences were found between men and women in terms of facing the above problems.

The above data presented is also reflected in the needs of the surveyed population, and includes those who are willing to engage in income-generating agricultural activities in the future.

About 20% of the surveyed population reported receiving non-agricultural income via wages and about 10% via self-employment. The data showed a clear gender wage gap: the median annual wage for men is 4,000 GEL, while for women it is 3,000 GEL. The median annual self-employment income for men is 4,000 GEL, while for women it is half of that: 2,000 GEL.

According to experts (key informant interviews), addressing poverty in rural regions and creating a sustainable livelihood as well as income-generating activities were complex issues. Among other things, this would require a change in behavior and a willingness to take certain risks so that production could be increased for sales purposes, for establishing an agribusiness and/or for joining or establishing a cooperatives. However, only 20.9%

³⁵ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.
<https://dspace.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

of those surveyed planned to engage in some kind of income-generating agricultural activities. Out of those who think about expanding *land cultivation activities*, 40.3% were women and 59.7% were men. Some 5.5% planned to take a loan to address their needs.

Generally, loans are more difficult to access for women than for men, as women to a lesser extent possess land or a house that would function as collateral for the bank. In Georgia, women are more often co-owners of property (for example, as shareholders of their parents' property or in the case of divorce) than owners.

Only 9.3% of the survey respondents reported taking a loan to finance farming activities, and no statistically significant difference between women and men was found. Forty-nine percent of these loans were taken for purchasing equipment; 20.9% for purchasing livestock; 17% for operational/running costs; and the remaining 13% was divided among other expenses. Among respondents, 5.3% think that agricultural credits are not equally available for men and women. No statistically significant gender difference is found in this answer.

Key informant interviews showed that most of the population was not primarily interested in agriculture or farm development; they wished to have permanent jobs in, for example, construction, education, or medicine as a main or more sustainable source of income. The key informants also noted that, unfortunately, the rural population does not express a special interest in learning new or other ways of *land cultivation or animal husbandry*. Focus group meetings showed that those farmers who were actively engaged in income-generating activities were also interested in receiving deeper and more advanced knowledge as well as practical skills in their respective areas of interest. Those who were not engaged in income generating activities were not interested in expanding their knowledge, as they did not see a tangible outcome of such development, were scared of innovations, and/or may also lack the finances needed to invest in business development.

Main Gender Inequalities in Agriculture and Rural Development

In fact, gender equality issues in agriculture and rural development are more or less the same across the country – incl. Kvareli Municipality of Kakheti region. This was consistently demonstrated by FAO assessment³⁶ across the Georgia that attempted to highlight the challenges, gaps and practices in the area of gender and agriculture and rural development that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers in their decision-making and their implementation of development interventions.

This reiterated the main gender inequalities in the country. These included: the gap between policies, legislation and their implementation; the gender gap in earnings; the vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in employment; the widespread of gender stereotypes; the rigid division of gender roles and decision-making at all levels, and other systemic issues.

This assessment drew attention to rural women's time poverty. Women in rural areas were extensively involved in work related to the production of goods and services for the family and household use. This work included crop production and breeding of livestock in the households' plots and family farms; production of household goods; production of food for consumption by the family and household members and for sale; fetching water and firewood; housework; looking after children, the elderly and sick members of the families. Poor rural infrastructure, the low level of housing, limited access to transport and modern energy supplies increased

³⁶ FAO (2018). Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia – Country Gender Assessment Series. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ad43affd-9e14-41ce-96c7-e9b84edf5709/content>

women's workload and time use. However, even women themselves rarely considered this work because it is not paid and is considered part of their gender responsibilities. As such, their contribution to the agricultural production remained invisible and under-recognized.

At the same time, the above assessment emphasized women's limited access to productive resources such as land, finance and decision-making - and more limited when compared to men - access to information, new technologies and agricultural inputs.

This may often happen due to the widespread stereotypes that areas such as, for example, agricultural machinery 'naturally' belongs to the men's domain. Trainings and services for these products also tend to be directed towards men. This approach not only sustains the existing status-quo. It also overlooks women's existing roles (in the management and storage of pesticides, for example), ignoring the fact that if women had better access to training and information, they would increase agricultural productivity.

Main gender inequalities in agriculture - including sustainable land management (SLM), land degradation neutrality (LDN), and rural development - based on nationwide aggregate data and analyses, can be broadly characterized for Kvareli Municipality in the Kakheti Region in the section below:

- *Gap between legislation, policies and their implementation*

Despite the progress made by the Government of Georgia over the last two decades in improving the national legislative frameworks and developing policies in gender equality, the enforcement and monitoring of these laws and policies remains a challenge.

- *The social status of women in rural areas (villages) remains low, gender stereotypes persist and there is a low awareness of existing gender inequalities*

This implies a rigid division of gender roles and decision-making within the household and family farming that directly and negatively affects women's economic opportunities. Gender inequalities and gender stereotypes are perceived as somehow natural or acceptable. Agricultural work (as helpers and not as managers) along with domestic and care work are both believed to be women's primary responsibilities, and there is a general underestimation of time workload of women for this work.

The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes are reinforced at different levels. For example, given the social existing patrilocal form of marriage, rural households have less interest in investing in girls because the potential economic returns are perceived to be significantly lower than that of boys. This has long-term implications for the status of young women and their life opportunities, limiting their abilities to have access to well- paid jobs and other various resources. It also has an impact on overall agricultural productivity and rural development.

- *Significant gender pay gap, and women are overrepresented as unpaid workers*

Because of the perception of women as helpers or contributing family members, they are more likely to be involved in unpaid and informal work, and the gender pay gaps in agriculture, forestry and fisheries are significant. Women are also paid less in almost all the sectors of agriculture. As of 2020, in agriculture, hunting and forestry, women earn 75 percent of men's salary, what falls to 35 percent of men's salary

in fisheries. Nearly 60 percent of self-employed women are non-paid workers³⁷.

- *Gender gap in technical and professional expertise on agriculture and rural development*

There is both a vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in employment, with men being more highly represented in higher managerial positions and in technical subjects as agriculture, engineering and construction, where very few women are represented.

- *Women's access to information, innovation and knowledge is lower compared to men*

Due to deeply entrenched bias, 'farmers' are perceived only as men, while women are seen only as 'wives of farmers.' Rural advisory services, as it was revealed by FAO³⁸, inform farmers by contacting a small number of men from local communities, and who tend to inform other men farmers of the neighborhood. Women are usually excluded from these communications and mobilization channels because they are less likely to be regarded as farmers in their own right.

Furthermore, women are only between 9 and 25 percent of employees of rural advisory services in the Kakheti region, which reinforces the consideration of extension service channels as "masculine" domains. This low access to information, knowledge and agricultural innovation hinders, in turn, women's economic opportunities.

- *Women's access to new technologies, machinery and agricultural inputs is lower compared to men*

According to official sources, women and men from rural areas (villages) have similar access to computers and the Internet. However, in family farming practice, men are usually involved in agricultural activities that require technology and machinery, and women are mostly involved in manual and labor-intensive work. Women have less access to labor-saving technologies partly because of the widespread stereotype that machinery is a "man's thing" and because women have limited access to finance and decision making.

The same happens in accessing irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. Because men are regarded as decision-makers and those responsible for dealing with providers, women experience de facto barriers in accessing these resources.

- *Women's limited access to ownership of land and other property*

The lack of land registration limits women's access to governmental subsidies, credit and grant schemes that operate in the regions because of lack of collateral. More importantly, limited access to land (or any other property) ownership and registration also diminishes women's status in and outside the family. It has been demonstrated that women who own property are less likely to suffer from domestic abuse, as they have a way out.

- *Women's limited access to large, more profitable and wholesale markets*

Wholesale marketing is mostly associated with men while retail and small marketing is associated with women. Women have less access to mobility and means of transportation, including trucks, and

³⁷ GeoStat (2021). *Women and Men in Georgia / Statistical Publication, Tbilisi, 2021.*
https://www.geostat.ge/media/41855/WOMEN-AND-MEN-IN-GEORGIAN_-2021.pdf

³⁸ FAO (2018). *Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia – Country Gender Assessment Series.* Rome, pp. 80.
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ad43affd-9e14-41ce-96c7-e9b84edf5709/content>

usually can only carry small amounts of products. As a result, they mostly only have access to local markets. Women usually sell milk, vegetables and fruits, including berries and other non-wood forest products. These are usually products that women produce or collect themselves. Men are mostly associated with selling meat. Women are perceived as better sellers due to the stereotype that women have better communication skills than men.

- *Women's underrepresented in cooperatives, both as members and as chairpersons*

The Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development of Georgia³⁹ aims to promote women's social and economic advancement. However, gender equality considerations are not systematically mainstreamed in other laws and decisions. There are programs focusing especially on women's participation, but they are insufficient. Women only make up 25 percent of all farmers' cooperative members according to the latest data. As of 2018⁴⁰, out of 2 106 cooperatives, only 100 (4.7 percent) were headed by women.

- *Reoccurring gender imbalances in food and nutrition security*

Access to diverse, high-quality food is problematic especially in remote settlements due to poor infrastructure. Even though women generally buy and cook food for their family, they consume food with lower nutritional value than men do. This has direct effects on women's health conditions, preterm complication and mortality as well as newborn and infant health conditions.

- *Poor rural infrastructure, limited access to transport and modern energy supplies*

Poor public transport and infrastructure are reflected in a lack of regularly scheduled public transport to villages and smaller towns, the lack of lighting, bus stops, commuter information, pedestrian crossings and road signs. This restricted mobility also poses other burdens on women, from limited access to social services including medical services to access to administration, information and decision-making.

- *Poor housing impact on rural women's workload*

Since domestic activities are socially linked with female gender roles, infrastructural development (e.g., women's lower access to transportation and mobility) and the low level of modernization of households, including access to domestic appliances, create and increased burdens for local women. Women are also severely affected by water restrictions as they are responsible for fetching water when there is no centralized water supply. This adds an extra burden to their workload.

- *Access to basic energy recourses as well as modern energy services for rural women*

Other health hazards arise from the fact that women do most of the cooking. They are exposed to large amounts of smoke and particulates from indoor fires and suffer from a number of respiratory diseases. Unequal gender relations limit women's ability to participate and voice their energy needs in decision-making at all levels of the energy system.

³⁹ Government of Georgia (2019). Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2027 and its Action Plan for 2021-2023.

<https://eu4georgia.eu/wp-content/uploads/Agriculture-and-Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2021%E2%80%932027.pdf>

⁴⁰ FAO (2018). Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia – Country Gender Assessment Series. Rome, pp. 80.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ad43affd-9e14-41ce-96c7-e9b84edf5709/content>

- *Low level of access to rural finance*

Women's access to financial resources is dependent on women's access to the property in rural areas (villages). Due to limited or no access to land and other property, women cannot participate in some of the agricultural funding schemes and are not always eligible for bank loans. Women are less likely to be registered as property owners, whether of land, houses, or capital equipment, leaving them at a significant disadvantage. For the same reason, funding schemes in rural areas (villages) are less accessible for women except for the cases when women are the target.

- *Roles in crop agriculture*

Both women and men are major contributors to crop production in Georgia as in other countries of the region. The primary annual crops grown on agricultural holdings are maize, haricot beans, potatoes, vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, red beets, cabbages, capsicum and paprika peppers, garlic, dry onions, green onions, greens, carrots, eggplants and other vegetables. Annual crops also include wheat, barley, oats, maize, melons, hay from perennial grasses and hay from annual grasses. As far as permanent crops go, agricultural holdings primarily produce fruits (grapes, apples, pears, quinces, plums, cherries, walnuts, other fruits). Regarding time use, the crop value chain is slightly more dominated by men (98.15 days a year) than women (84.29 days a year)⁴¹. While women are mostly engaged in producing substance crops for home consumption, men are responsible for cash crops due to its specificity (e.g., mechanization, traveling long distances and dealing with providers and middle persons are associated with masculine gender roles). Pest and disease management are also viewed as men's tasks. Women are responsible for buying, sowing and sorting and are heavily engaged in the manual harvesting of crops.

- *Rigid gender-based roles*

Men in Georgia are stereotypically expected to be the main breadwinners, providers and protectors of women and the family. These masculine gender roles - often associated with alcohol, tobacco consumption and risk-taking behaviours - put pressure on men, leading to frustration when these social expectations are not fulfilled.

- *Data gaps on gender issues in agriculture and rural development*

Availability of sex-disaggregated data at the national level has increased in recent years. Since 2011, Geostat has regularly collected sex-disaggregated data in health, education, social protection, labour, income and expenditure, entrepreneurship, crime and representation in the institutions of governance policy areas. These statistics are presented in the Geostat annual publication "Women and Men in Georgia"⁴². Despite the progress being made, there are still areas where accurate and reliable gender-sensitive data and gender-specific indicators are needed.

⁴¹ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.

<https://dspace.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

⁴² GeoStat / Women and Men in Georgia / Statistical Publications.

<https://www.geostat.ge/en>

Recommendations for Advancing SLM and LDN in Kvareli Municipality through Gender-Responsive Approaches

As of 2021, women comprised more than 53% of the total population in Georgia⁴³. According to the Georgia ranked 61st of 189 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI) 2020⁴⁴.

2020 Human Development Report by UNDP⁴⁵, Georgia has improved its Gender Development Index (HDI) rating, securing the 60th spot globally. Georgia's HDI stands at 0.814 with a marginal decline from its 2019 value of 0.816.

Like many other countries worldwide, Georgia has yet to fully regain its pre-pandemic development levels. When accounting for societal inequality, Georgia's Inequality-adjusted HDI experiences a reduction of 10.6 percent, settling at 0.728. While this reflects a slight improvement from 2015, when Georgia's HDI lost 12.5 percent to inequality, Georgia's decline in HDI is still noticeable compared with other countries in the Eastern Europe region. Gender Inequality Index (GII) that measures disparities across reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation, ranking Georgia 69 out of 166 countries with a GII value of 0.283 in 2021, Georgia has demonstrated steady progress in reducing gender inequalities since 2009. However, recent years have seen a slight regression, with Georgia GII rising to 0.287 in 2021.

These indicators suggest that Georgia, including the **Kvareli Municipality**, generally demonstrates relatively equitable gender conditions, which provides a favorable foundation for addressing gender-related issues and promoting further progress.

There is a need to contribute directly and indirectly to enhance the status of women by strengthening their capacity to participate in decision-making processes and engage in SLM/LDN. These efforts have the potential to improve their economic well-being.

Rural areas (villages) in Georgia, similar to the **Kvareli Municipality**, are experiencing population decline primarily due to a lack of economic opportunities and jobs. This migration trend affects both men and women, with approximately 56% of migrants being men and 44% women in 2021.

There is a need to consider this demographic dynamic and address migration-related challenges by fostering local opportunities for both men and women.

The key areas in agriculture, and in particular in SLM/LDN have to be strategically targeted with a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment to ensure that SLM/LDN contributes effectively to community well-being. In **Kvareli Municipality**, more than 52% of the total population are women, and they are disproportionately affected by agricultural land degradation due to their significant yet underrecognized roles in SLM.

Women's and men's needs in this context **differ due to their distinct roles** and responsibilities. Women are primarily concerned with securing reliable sources of fodder, improving livestock health, and enhancing

⁴³ GeoStat (2021). Population of Georgia (as of 1 January 2021). [online]: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/41/population>

⁴⁴ UNDP (2020). Human Development Report 2020 /UNDP, New York, 2020.
available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr2020.pdf>

⁴⁵ UNDP (2021). The 2020 Human Development Report.
<https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr2021.pdf>

productivity to support household nutrition and income. However, they have less access to cropland leasing, land ownership, and financial resources, which limits their participation in SLM decisions and their eligibility for available credit and grant schemes. Consequently, their economic opportunities are constrained, exacerbating poverty and inequality. In contrast, men are more involved in crop growing, market access, and cropland infrastructure-related aspects.

These differences have to be addressed through gender-responsive and transformative approaches that ensure that agricultural activities are tailored to both women's and men's needs and constraints, preventing unintended reinforcement of gender inequities.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets in the municipality will become more productive, sustainable, and resilient to climate change by incorporating gender-responsive and transformative considerations.

In terms of inclusive decision-making and capacity building, active promotion of women's participation in community-level decision-making processes related to SLM is very important by setting a target of at least 50% female representation in local planning activities and training sessions.

Through such activities women may will receive leadership and technical training tailored to their roles in SLM, enhancing their decision-making power and influence. LDN baseline assessment, feasibility studies, and Municipal LDN Strategy will integrate gender-responsive and gender-transformative perspectives. This, in turn, will encourage the active and effective participation of women and reflect their needs throughout the degraded lands restoration activities, emphasizing affirmative action during restoration planning and implementation, supported by gender-responsive and transformative budgeting. Women will particularly benefit from skills development, education, and training, as well as improved access to modern knowledge, which will contribute to increasing both their incomes and social capital.

Additionally, it has to be developed ***Municipal Gender-Responsive Communication and Awareness Strategy*** to promote SLM/LDN. This strategy has to incorporate gender mainstreaming across knowledge products, including approaches such as engaging both male and female knowledge developers for diverse perspectives, using gender-responsive language and balanced imagery that portrays women as agents of change, and ensuring content is based on reliable sources and gender-disaggregated data. It will also reference relevant national and international policy frameworks, strategies, and plans.

Municipal gender analysis has to be conducted periodically to provide gender-responsive and transformative recommendations to ensure that gender considerations are properly integrated into SLM/LDN, aligned with national gender equality legislation⁴⁶ and addressing existing gender equality barriers⁴⁷.

Comprehensive Municipal Gender Mainstreaming Activity Plan in SLM-LDN for Kvareli Municipality has to be also developed, capturing insights from the in-depth gender analysis to empower women and men while achieving gender-equitable outcomes. This plan has to ensure appropriate and equal participation or

⁴⁶ Gender Equality Act (2010) // Law of Georgia on Gender Equality of 26 March, 2010 (*Official Gazette of Georgia – Legislative Herald of Georgia (LHG)*, web-page: matsne.gov.ge, Ref.: 2844-Is, Registration Code No. 010.100.000.05.001.003.962) - [Unofficial Translation in English]

<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/91624?publication=9>

⁴⁷ Parliament of Georgia (2018). Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations.

<https://www.undp.org/georgia/publications/gender-equality-georgia-barriers-and-recommendations-2018>

representation of women and men in decision-making in SLM/LDN activities. It has to also consider women's and men's different needs based on their concerns, experiences (including roles and responsibilities), and constraints, ensuring that proposed activities and approaches lead to gender-responsive results without unintendedly reinforcing gender inequities. The plan has to include specific gender targets to integrate gender considerations into monitoring and evaluation processes. Additionally, gender will have to be properly mainstreamed within the appropriate budget to ensure sufficient financial and human resources are dedicated to gender-responsive activities.

Conclusion

The gender profile of Kvareli municipality shows that certain steps have been made to elaborate and implement gender policy: gender equality council has been established, municipal gender equality action plan has been elaborated.

However, it is necessary to make rapid steps to move the practice of gender policy implementation in the municipality to a new level.

First of all, the municipality should ensure regular registry of gender statistics so that while elaborating the municipal policy and programs/projects it could ensure gender mainstreaming, consider the needs of girls/women and implement local policy that supports gender equality.

It is necessary to elaborate a new municipal plan that would lead to solving the challenges identified by the gender profile of the municipality:

- Improve the rural infrastructure, especially to ensure water provision in every family, arrange waste management (add garbage bins, increase the frequency of taking out the garbage, make sure everyone takes rubbish to bins, etc.);
- Ensure municipal transport, or to support private companies offer comfortable services to rural population;
- Increase access of the families to kindergartens in every village (add transport wherever necessary);
- Increase access to healthcare services, ensure involvement of rural population in screening programs, eradicate the practice of home birth, include preventive mechanisms to rural hospital service;
- Improve rural sport infrastructure in a way to ensure girls/women's involvement in sport activities;
- Create spaces for cultural activities in rural areas;
- Create spaces for social gatherings, ensure parks and squares;
- Finance household horticultural programs by raising knowledge on bio and eco production aimed to increase rural women's income.