

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

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*Prepared within the framework of the GEF funded Project
“Generating Economic and Environmental Benefits from Sustainable Land
Management for Vulnerable Rural Communities of Georgia”
(GEF Project ID: 9730)*

REC Caucasus, 2021



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

2021

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

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Methodology

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

1. Information obtained from Sagarejo 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 noteworthy 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 Sagarejo municipality has been carried out in June-July 2021. The field activities have been carried out by the representatives of Sagarejo Municipal Administration (Executive Body) in administrative units. Following the survey, the information about the City of Sagarejo and 19 villages of Sagarejo municipality have been assessed and analyzed.

General Overview

Sagarejo Municipality covers an area of 1,553.7 square kilometers (155,370 hectares)¹ and is located in the western part of the Kakheti region, directly bordering the capital city of Tbilisi.

The northeastern part of the municipality is crossed by the Gombori Ridge, which reaches its highest altitude in this part.

In the extreme northwest of the municipality, west of the Iori River, the Saguramo Mountains with the 1874 meter high Ialno ridge extends.

The central and southern part of the municipality is occupied by the dry and sparsely populated Iori highlands.

The major land covers are cropland-grassland mosaic (71%) and forests (29%).

The municipality has a population of 52,300 (as of January 1, 2021), and the main economic income of the municipality is agriculture.

Sagarejo Municipality consists of one city (Sagarejo) and 46 villages, which are organized into 25 administrative units (*formerly self-governing communities*).



¹ GeoStat (2018). Results of the 2014 National Population Census in Georgia / Editors: Todradze Gogita, Paata Shavishvili. Tbilisi, Georgia [in Georgian] - <https://www.geostat.ge/media/20680/2014-wlis-aRweris-ZiriTadi-Sedegebi.pdf>

Gender Equality Policies at Municipal Level

Sagarejo Municipality Gender Equality Institutional and Legal Frameworks

According to the resolution # 38 of the Sagarejo municipal City Council, Gender Equality Council of Sagarejo municipality has been established on June 29, 2018², which is chaired by the Head of Sakrebulo. The Council is comprised of 13 members (7 female, 6 male) who represent both the City Council as well as the Administration (Executive Body). The Council member is also an NGO. Sagarejo municipal Sakrebulo has confirmed 2021 gender equality action plan.

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.³

Women's Participation in Decision-Making in Sagarejo Municipality

Following the 2021 local self-government elections, the new composition of the Council will be confirmed at the forthcoming Sakrebulo session.

Although the number of female representatives has increased throughout the country following the 2021 municipal elections amid the introduction of legislative gender quotas among others in Sagarejo municipality, the number of male decision-makers both at the Sakrebulo as well as the Administration (Executive Body) significantly exceeds women. Only the number of female public servants exceeds the number of males.

Based on the information provided by the gender focal point (28/12/2021) out of 39 members of Sagarejo municipal Sakrebulo 9 are females (23%) and 30 are males (76%). The Head of Sakrebulo is a male; his 2 deputies are also males, while 1 deputy is a female. There are 11 people holding political positions at the City Council out of which 2 are females (18%), 9 are males (82%). There are 5 commissions at the Sakrebulo 4 of which are being chaired by men, 1 - by a woman. A total of three people are holding managerial positions: 1 male chief of staff, 1 male head of department, 1 female head of department. Out of a total of 17 public servants at the Sakrebulo 11 are females, 6 are males. Out of the people employed under the labor contracts 4 are males and 2 are females.

Municipal Sakrebulo (Legislative Body)			
	Position	Woman	Men
1.	Member of Sakrebulo	9	30
2.	Opposition members of Sakrebulo	4	10
3.	Person holding political positions	2	9
3.1	Head of Sakrebulo	0	1
3.2	Deputy Head of Sakrebulo	1	2

² Georgian legislative herald, <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4240484?publication=0>

³ Guideline, How to Create a Municipal "Women's Room" And improve local decision making.

3.3	Head of commission	1	4
3.4	Head of faction	-	2
4.	People holding managerial positions	1	2
4.1	Chief of staff	-	1
4.2	Head of service	-	-
4.3	Head of department	1	1
5.	Public servant	11	6
6.	Professional officer		
7.	Persons employed under labor contract	2	4

Table 1 Gender statistics of Sakrebulo members and employees

Sagarejo municipal Mayor is a male. Both of his deputies are males. The total number of people holding managerial positions stands at 21 (11 male, 10 female). This includes 1 female chief of staff, heads of services (4 males, 4 females) and heads of departments (4 males, 5 females).

A total of 105 people have been employed as public servants in Sagarejo (57 females, 48 males). The number of females employed under contract exceeds the number of males. Out of a total of 16 employees 7 are males, 9 - females. The total number of people employed under administrative contracts stands at 42 (29 males, 13 females).

Municipal Administration (Executive Body)			
	Position	Women	Men
1.	People holding political positions		3
1.1	Mayor		1
1.2	Deputy Mayor		2
2.	People holding managerial positions	10	11
2.1	Chief of staff	1	
2.2	Head of service	4	4
2.3	Head of department	5	4
3.	Public servant (Total: 110, 8 vacant)	57	45
4.	Professional officer		
5.	People employed under contract (Total: 17, Secretary - vacant)	9	7
6.	People employed under administrative contract (Total: 45, 3 vacant)	13	29

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

Population

Following the 2014 census the overall number of population in Sagarejo municipality stood at 51 761, including 26 035 (50.3%) men, and 25 726 (49.7%) women.

Based on the information available at the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the number of population in Sagarejo municipality as of January 1, 2021 stood at 52 300. Unfortunately, no related gender disaggregated data is available about the number of population in Sagarejo municipality (Table #3)

Population of Sagarejo municipality		Male		Female		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2014 census	Town	5154	47.4%	5717	52.6%	10871	21%
	Village	20881	51.1%	20009	48.9%	40890	79%
Total		26035	50.3%	25726	49.7%	51761	100%
2021 January 1 data	Town	-	-	-	-	10500	20%
	Village	-	-	-	-	41800	80%
Total		-	-	-	-	52300	100%

Table 3 Number of population in Sagarejo municipality. Source: The National Statistics Office of Georgia

The number of people living in the Sagarejo municipality has slightly decreased compared to 2014, while the number of rural population has instead increased. Again, the majority (80%) of the population remains rural.

The ethnic composition of the population in Sagarejo municipality is diverse and includes: Georgians – 23 450 people, Azerbaijani – 23 918 people, Abkhaz – 2 people, Greek – 18 people, Ossetian – 100 people, Ukrainian – 4 people, Armenian – 66 people, Russian – 215 people, etc.⁴

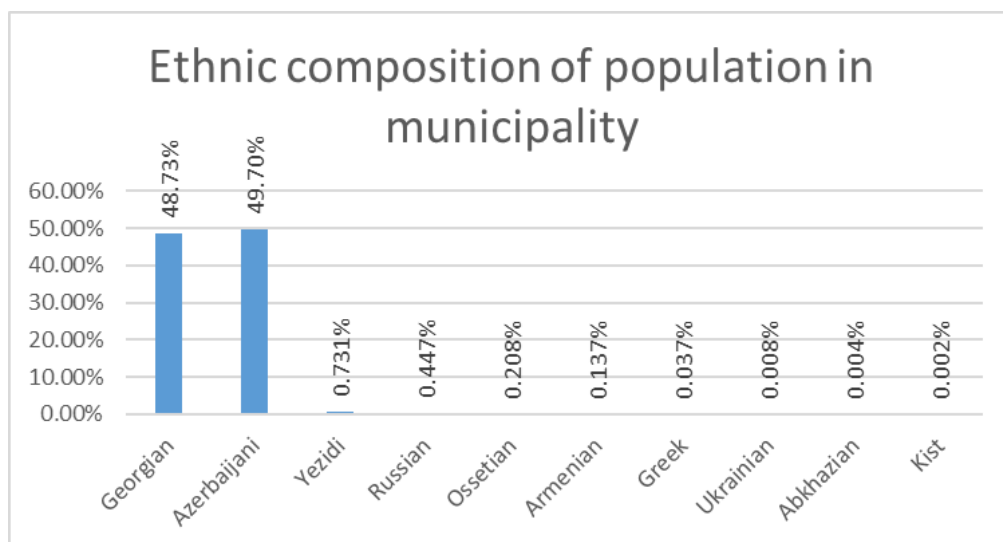


Chart 1 Ethnic composition of population in Sagarejo municipality

⁴ Sagarejo municipality web page, <http://sagarejo.gov.ge/ge/mdebareoba-ganlageba-municipaluri-centri>

The information provided by the Sagarejo municipality in 2021, does not contain a thorough gender and age disaggregated data about the population of 46 villages in 47 administrative units. The information provided by the municipality however contains gender and age disaggregated data of the population in 21 administrative units, including the City of Sagarejo (55% men, 45% women) and 20 villages (51% men, 49% women).

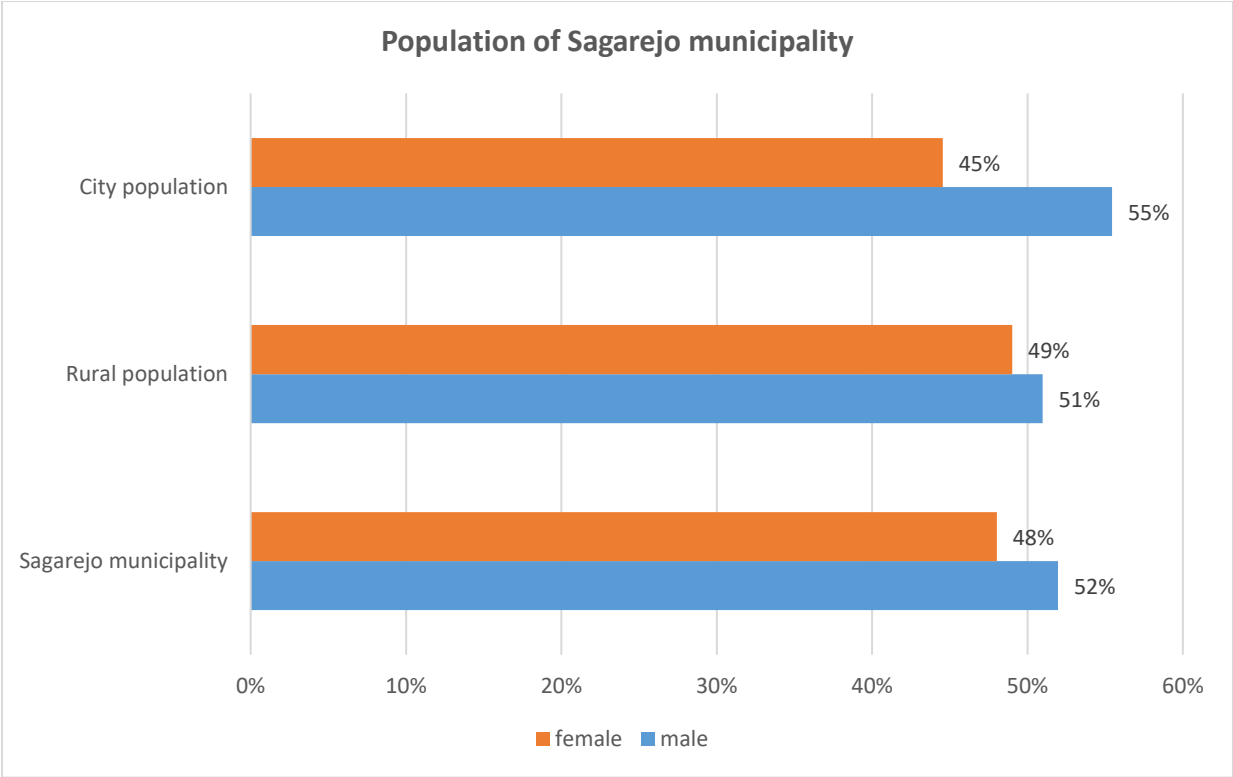


Chart 1 Gender disaggregation statistics of population in Sagarejo municipality

Migration

Internal migration

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

Most people migrate from the villages of Sagarejo municipality to Tbilisi (90%), Rustavi (5%) and Batumi (5%).

Migration is especially frequent to the large cities of Georgia from 4 villages (Khamshi, Kakabeti, Shibliani, Mughanlo) of the municipality.

External migration

A vast majority of the population migrates abroad. The major destination countries are Italy (25%), Greece (17%), Turkey (15%). The vast majority (78%) of migrants are women, while men compose 22% of migrants.

As a rule, women migrate mainly to Italy, Greece and Turkey to find jobs.

Italy has been named the top destination country for migration in 13 villages of the Sagarejo municipality, Greece – in 9 villages, Turkey – in 8 villages. Poland is one of the major destination countries for 5 villages of the municipality, Germany – for 6.

The detailed data about the major destination countries for migration for the villages of Sagarejo municipality is available in Chart #3.

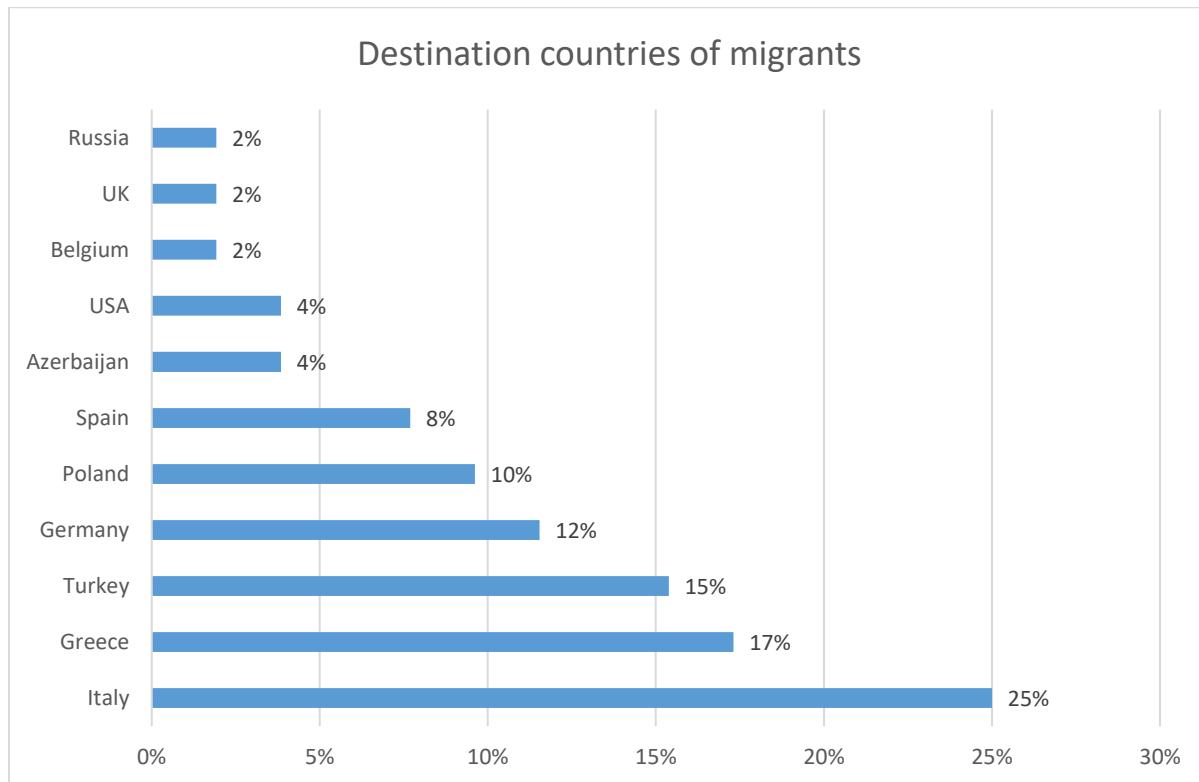


Chart 2 Destination countries of migrants from Sagarejo municipality

Households

No data about the overall number of households is 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.

The results of the survey based on the questionnaire showed that the representatives of the Administration (Executive Body) failed to obtain the information.

In addition, the example of the two villages showed that the Administration (Executive Body) representatives do not understand the essence of gender disaggregation of household heads, which points at their low gender sensitivity.

Infrastructure and Access to Services

Roads

Only 70% of the internal roads of the City of Sagarejo and 24% of the villages have been covered with asphalt. The vast majority of the road in the town (20%) is covered by gravel, like the vast majority of the village roads (59.2%). See Chart 4, Chart 5.

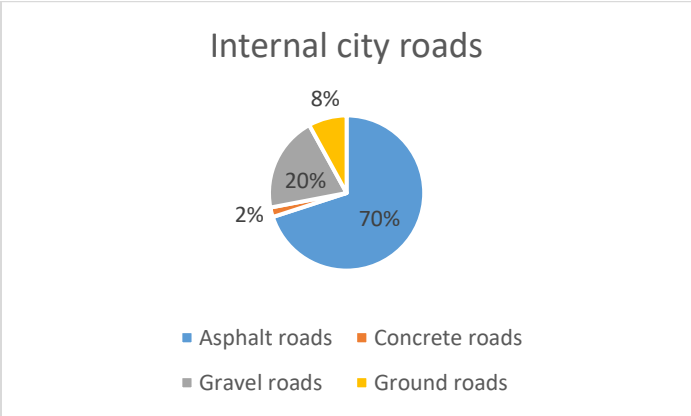


Chart 3 Internal city roads

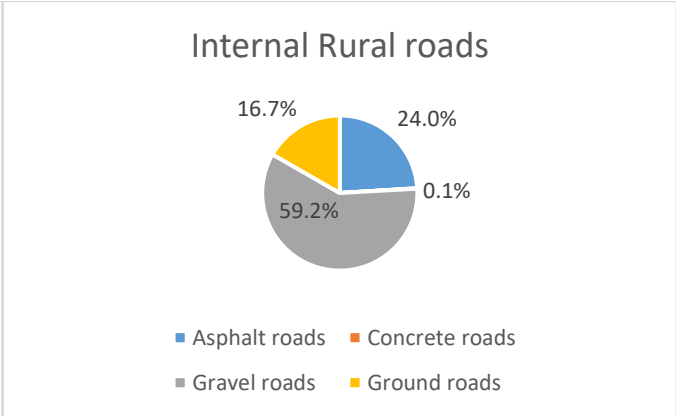


Chart 4 Internal Rural roads

The internal road infrastructure of the villages is negatively assessed – more often it is assessed as bad – 58%, very bad – 11%, while only in %5 of the villages it is assessed as average. In the City of Sagarejo, internal roads are assessed as average. See Chart 6.

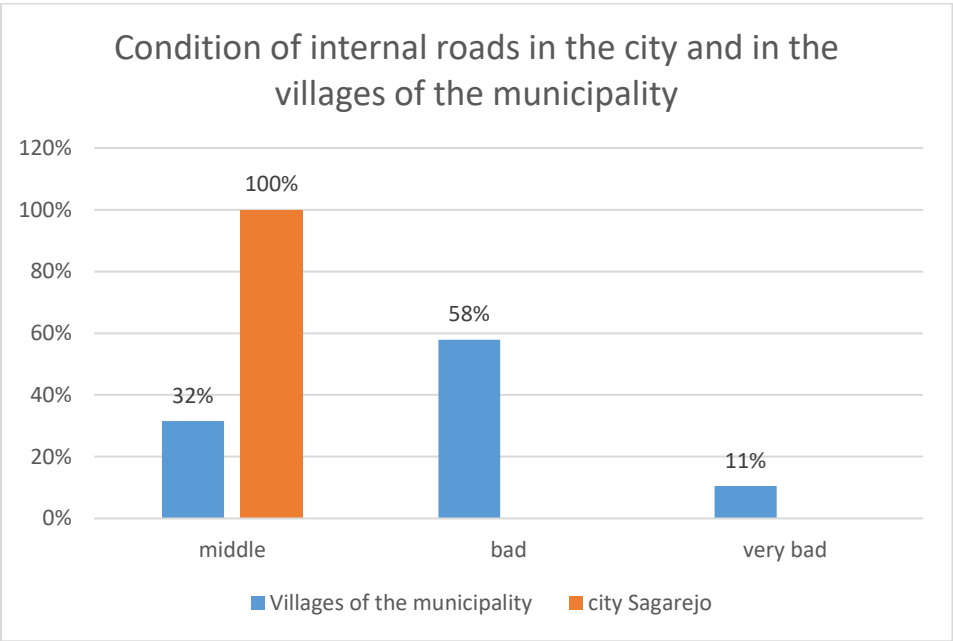


Chart 5 Condition of internal roads in the city of Sagarejo and in the villages of the municipality

Drainage system is ensured in 26% of the internal roads, it is partly ensured in 37% of the cases, while in other 37% there is hardly any drainage system on the roads of the villages. See Chart 7

In the villages with drainage systems it is in need of cleaning. The drainage system in the City of Sagarejo is assessed as good.

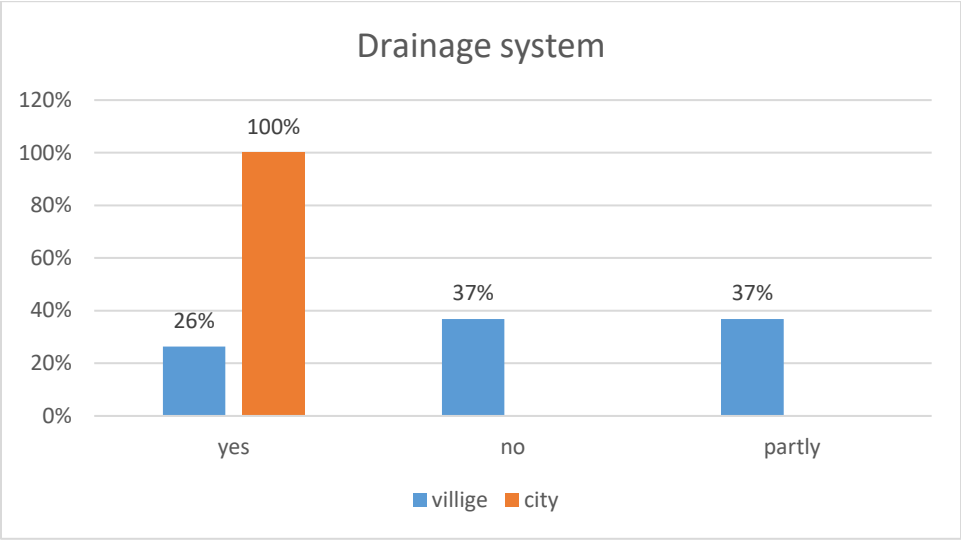


Chart 6 Drainage system

Outdoor lighting

Based on the information provided by the Administration (Executive Body) representatives in the administrative units of Sagarejo municipality, 90% of the roads in the villages are equipped with outdoor lighting, while in the remaining 10% of the cases the outdoor lighting is ensured mainly on central roads.

Transport

No municipal transport operates in Sagarejo 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.

No municipal transport operates in the City of Sagarejo.

Car owners are mainly men both in the town and the villages. A total of 76% of men, and 24% of women possess cars throughout the municipality.

The situation differs in the town and the villages though.

The number of women owners of the cars in the town is 23% higher than those in the village.

As for the men – the situation is vice versa as 23% less men possess cars in the town compared to the villages.

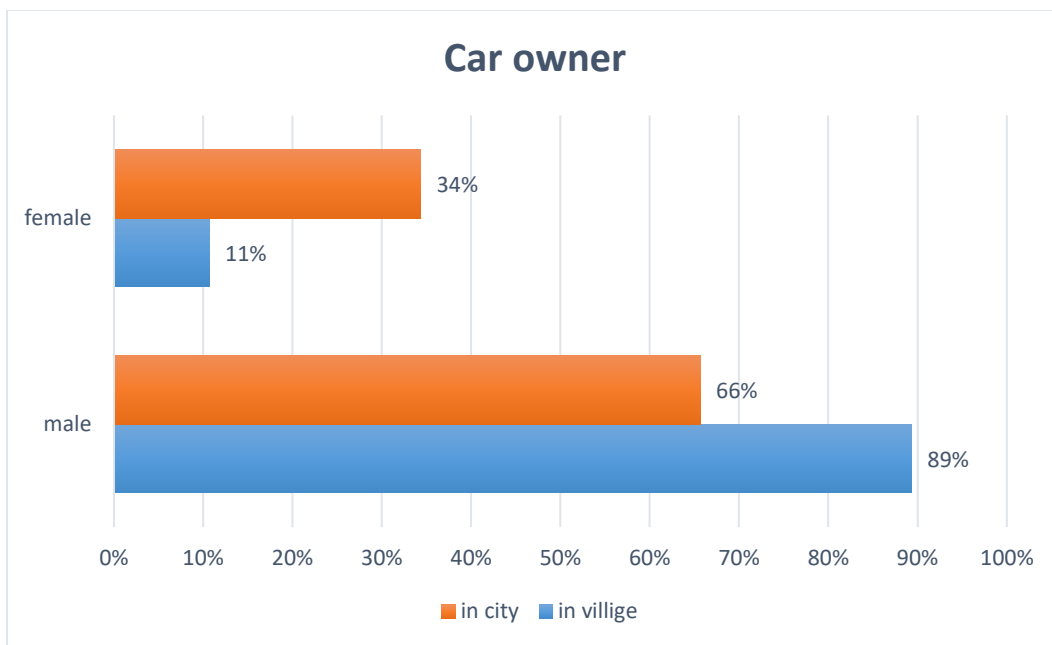


Chart 7 Gender Statistics of car owner in Sagarejo Municipality

The data illustrates that accessibility on transport remains a serious challenge for women. The number of women who possess cars is much lower compared to men. There is no public transport available for the population, which creates a barrier especially for women to access a variety of services (including healthcare, education, etc.). However, in comparison to Kvareli municipality there is a positive trend as the number of women who possess cars in Sagarejo municipality is 16% more than in Kvareli municipality.

Therefore, it is important to develop municipal transport, arrange its schedule 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 vast majority of the villages of Sagarejo municipality is gasified; 92% of the families receive natural gas, while in the City of Sagarejo the number of families receiving natural gas stands at 95%.

Although the majority of the villages of the municipality have been gasified, firewood stove remains the main source of heating there, only in certain cases do the families use gas stoves as well. 85% of the rural population uses firewood stoves for heating, while only 15% of the families use gas stoves.

In the City of Sagarejo only 11% of the families have the central heating, 20% of the families use firewood stoves, while 69% - uses gas heaters. Most of population in the town and the villages receives firewood based on special tickets.

The fact that the families are still using firewood in winter despite the available 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 noteworthy that 15% of the families in the village of Duzagrama use biogas as an alternative source of energy, while 44 families of the Sagarejo municipality use sun batteries instead.

Although the number of families using alternative energy is not that high, this is a positive trend anyway.

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.

30% of the families of Sagarejo municipality receives drinking water via a major pipeline. 14% of the villages have an individual source of water supply. According to the information provided by the Sagarejo Administration (Executive Body) 53% of the main water provision station is protected, but the remaining 47% - is not. As for the main water provision station in the City of Sagarejo it has been assessed as satisfactory.

In 53% of the villages the water distribution system is properly designed, but in 47% - it is not.

42% of the water distribution network is mainly arranged with polyethylene pipes, while 58% is made of polyethylene, iron and cast iron, most of which are outdated and need to be replaced.

Drinking water

The villages of Sagarejo municipality are facing a challenge of constant and quality drinking water provision.

The water provision schedule is as follows:

- 35% of the villages of Sagarejo municipality receive water 24 hours a day
- 65% of the villages of Sagarejo municipality receives water on the schedule
- The City of Sagarejo receives water on the schedule 5-6 hour a day

The water provision schedule is not similar. The situation is especially noteworthy in the villages where the population receives water 2-3 days a week, for example in Ninotsminda, Giorgitsminda, Didi Chailuri, Verkhviani, Duzagrama. It is also not clear how many hours per day do the families receive water, because for example in the village of Ninotsminda the population only receives water one hour every other day.

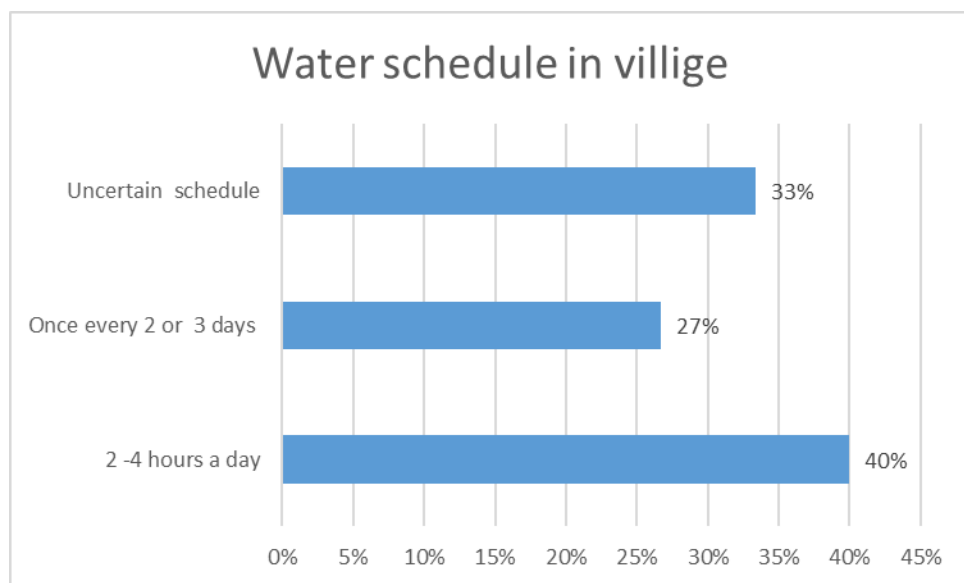


Chart 8 Water schedule in village

Delay in water provision

In 33% of the villages the delay in water provision is either frequent or very frequent, while in 67% of the cases - is seldom. The main reasons behind the delay include:

- Mechanical damage: Engine failure, water pump failure, well pump failure, pipe damage, water well failure
- Water pump station failure,
- Decrease of water debit, caused by weather conditions (drought in summer and freeze in winter)
- Usage of drinking water for irrigation (in 50% of the villages),
- Electricity shortage

Quality of drinking water

- In most cases the water quality is being inspected by the non-profit legal entity of Sagarejo Municipality water quality regulation and laboratory research center.

No cases of water poisoning have been identified in the municipality. However, the representatives of Administration (Executive Body) say the main water station is unprotected in 56% of the cases, while in the remaining 44% of the cases it is in good shape.

- 78% of the Administration (Executive Body) representatives assess the water quality as not very good and only 22% of them assess it as good.

Water and household duties

Continuous provision of quality water is the precondition for alleviating household duties. The majority of household tasks are women's duty. Often, they have to wash the dishes or the clothes in cold water.

Moreover, they do not always have enough water supply and have to bring it from elsewhere, which negatively affects the health of rural women.

To make their lives easier, the families who can afford to buy washing machines even in cases they do not have a continuous water provision or they have to fetch water from far away.

80% of the families in the City of Sagarejo and 79% of the families in the villages possess washing machines, but the number of the families which possess dishwashers is low.

Only 8% of the families in the City of Sagarejo and 2% of the families in the villages have a dishwasher.

Access to hot water is also a challenge both in the kitchens and the bathrooms. (See the chart below) The above information points at the heavy conditions and a household burden that women face both in the town and the villages and need to be improved.

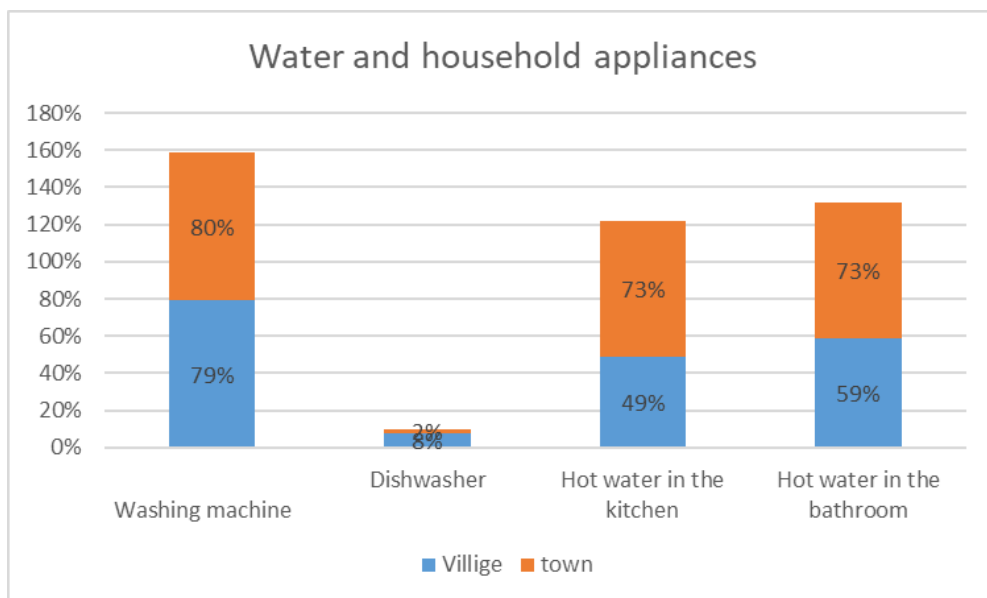


Chart 9 Water and household appliances

Counters of water provision networks

It is notable that the water provision network in the City of Sagarejo has no counters. Only 16% of the villages have the counters, 5% of the villages have counters partly, while 79% of the villages have no counters at all. “There are no counters, but if they will be available, everyone will get them”, one of the Administration (Executive Body) representatives said. This information points at the importance of water for every family and that the population is ready to pay for the water if the problem gets fixed.

Irrigation water

Irrigation water is available or partly available for 29% of the families, and is not at all available in 71% of the cases.

Sewerage system

The Sewerage system in the City of Sagarejo is not arranged, but nonexistence of the central and local sewerage system in the villages remains a challenge.

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. Garbage bins are emptied daily only in the City of Sagarejo and the village of Tskarostavi. In other cases, the garbage bins are being emptied once or twice a week. In 64% of the villages the number of rubbish bins is not sufficient. The number of bins is sufficient only in 32% of the cases. In the village of Sataplie there are no rubbish bins at all. In the two villages of Mughanlo and Duzagrama the garbage is being thrown on the central roadway.

In certain cases, the garbage is being thrown in the gorges, which are not cleaned afterwards. The situation in the village of Chailuri is especially concerning where according to the Administration (Executive Body) representatives the garbage is being thrown close to a cemetery and a stadium.

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

The number of women with higher education in Sagarejo municipality is 20% high compared to men. In the City of Sagarejo the number of women with higher education is 7% higher compared to men, while in the villages – 13%. Interestingly, the number of women and men with higher education in the villages of the municipality exceeds the total number of women and girls with higher education in the City of Sagarejo. See Chart 11.

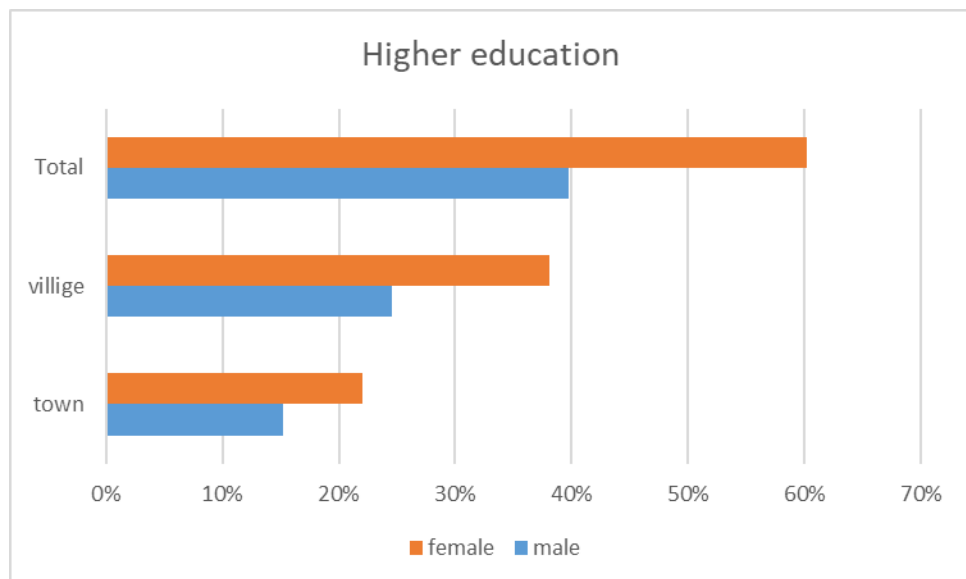


Chart 10 Higher education

Schools

The number of boys at all of the four levels of education exceeds the number of girls by 7%. See the chart below.

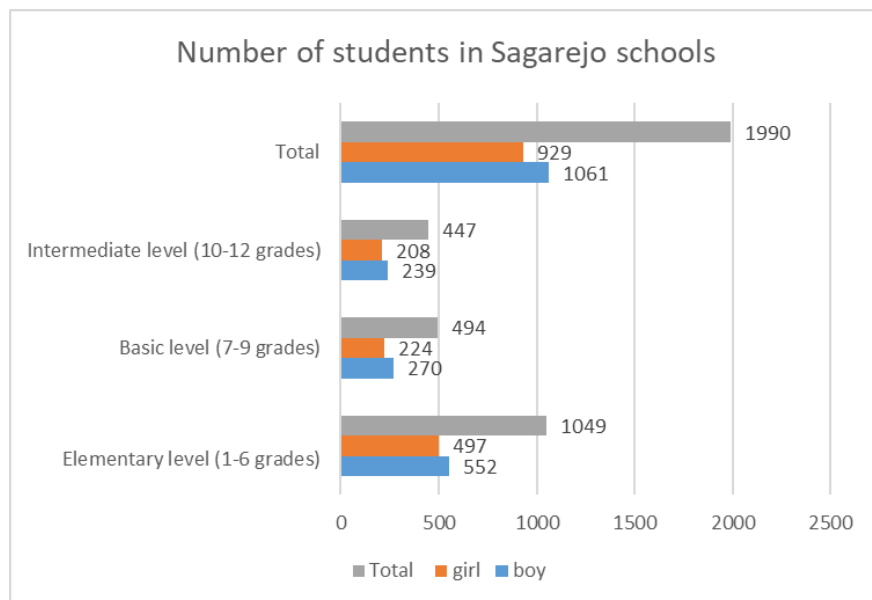


Chart 11 Number of students in town Sagarejo schools

There is a total of 19 school in the villages of Sagarejo municipality. Based on the information provided by the representatives of Administration (Executive Body) the number of boys at all of the four levels of education exceeds the number of girls by 10%. The difference is much higher compared to the town. The data does not show the entire picture in the villages as the Administration (Executive Body) representatives could not record all of the students. However, the information shows that the number of boys is exceeding the number of girls. See the table 4 below:

Gender disaggregated number of school students in the villages					
	Elementary level (1-6)	Basic level (7-9)	Secondary level (10-12)	Total	%
Girls	1057	456	368	1881	45%
Boys	1285	539	501	2325	55%
Total	2342	995	869	4206	100%

Table 4 Gender disaggregated number of school students in the villages

More than 55% of schools in the villages of Sagarejo municipality are repaired, 15% - are partly repaired, while 30% of schools need to be thoroughly repaired. 67% of schools use central heating in winter, in 33% of the cases they use firewood.

Only 42% of schools are equipped with computers, while in 58% of cases the schools are in need of computers. In 46% of the villages the internet is available at schools. The schools of the City of Sagarejo are equipped with computers and internet. Based on the information provided by the Administration (Executive Body) representatives, the vast majority of schools receive water.

In the villages where schools do not work the children go to neighboring schools on a school bus.

The vast majority of schools use the local sewerage system except for the City of Sagarejo which has a central system.

32% of the schools in the villages of Sagarejo municipality have sports stadiums, which are in good shape. In 32% of the cases the schools have sports stadiums which need to be repaired. In 32% of the cases the schools have no sports stadiums at all.

Schools in the City of Sagarejo have sports stadiums but part of them needs to be rehabilitated.

Kindergartens

20 villages of Sagarejo municipality have kindergartens. In the villages of Duzagrama and Sataplie there are no kindergartens at all. Sataplie is a small village with a total of 94 people (56% female, 44% male). As for the village of Duzagrama, it is one of the largest villages in the municipality mainly dominated by ethnic Azerbaijanis. A total of 3 618 people (48% female, 52% male) live in the village, while the number of children in kindergarten (aged 2 to 6) stands at 170 (75 boys, 95 girls). Despite such a high number of children there is no kindergarten in the village.

The total number of children of kindergarten age in 20 villages of Sagarejo municipality stands at 2 620. The number of boys is 6% high compared to girls. See the table 5 below.

Number of children of kindergarten age in the municipality			
	Boys	Girls	Total
Village	1054	965	2019
Town	336	265	601
Total	1390	1230	2620
	53%	47%	

Table 5 Number of children of kindergarten age in the municipality

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.

Over 20% of children in the villages and 2% - in the town do not go to kindergartens. 95% of children in the village of Mughanlo, which is mainly populated by ethnic Azerbaijani, do not go to kindergartens. According to the Administration (Executive Body) representatives, there is no kindergarten in the village. It is also noteworthy that in the village where 95% of children do not go to kindergartens, no woman possesses a car; only 7 men have cars in the village.

In the villages where there is no kindergarten, children rarely go to neighboring kindergartens due to long distance as their parents, mainly mothers, cannot afford taking them there. Nonexistence of municipal transport as well as lack of access to private vehicles (only 24% of women in the municipality possess cars) creates an additional obstacle.

In addition, women have to combine the time necessary for carrying their children to kindergartens with household duties.

11 kindergartens of the municipality have been repaired, 5 – need to be partly repaired, while 3 need to be entirely repaired.

The vast majority of kindergartens (67%) have gas heaters, so-called Karma, 13% of kindergartens get warmed with firewood stoves, while only 20% of kindergartens have central heating.

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

The kindergartens in Sagarejo municipality are not properly equipped with toys and literature.

Free Time, Non-Formal Education, Culture and Sport

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

Libraries are open in only 5 villages, while libraries in two villages need to be entirely repaired and equipped, the water is leaking, etc. In the villages where the libraries operate, they lack new books, access to the internet and computers. The libraries are equipped with internet and computers in the City of Sagarejo and the village of Duzagrama, where the library is located in the community centers.

Rural children have the opportunity to get involved in arts groups (music, dance, singing) only in 38% of the cases, while in 62% of the cases they lack that opportunity.

Sports sections are also challenging. There are sports sections in the City of Sagarejo and 81% of the villages of the municipality. This includes wrestling, football, basketball, rugby, volleyball. 74% of the villages have mini stadiums. There are no indoor sports halls in the village.

There are outdoor spaces for sports activities on the school territories.

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 sex disaggregated data and gender stereotypes, the stadiums are mainly used by boys (82%), while in 18% - both girls and boys. In the villages where the majority of stadiums are used by boys, girls are using stadiums only in 2 villages.

The small number of girls involved in sports activities 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 46 villages.

Free time and space

The main venues for public gatherings in the villages are certain areas called “Birzha”, stadiums, squares, schools, village centers.

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

The representatives of Administration (Executive Body) say that 78% of men spend their free time at the so-called “Birzha” as well as they often feast, surf the internet and spend time at home, while women spend their free time differently: they are mainly at home, watch TV (TV series) and in rare cases they go out.

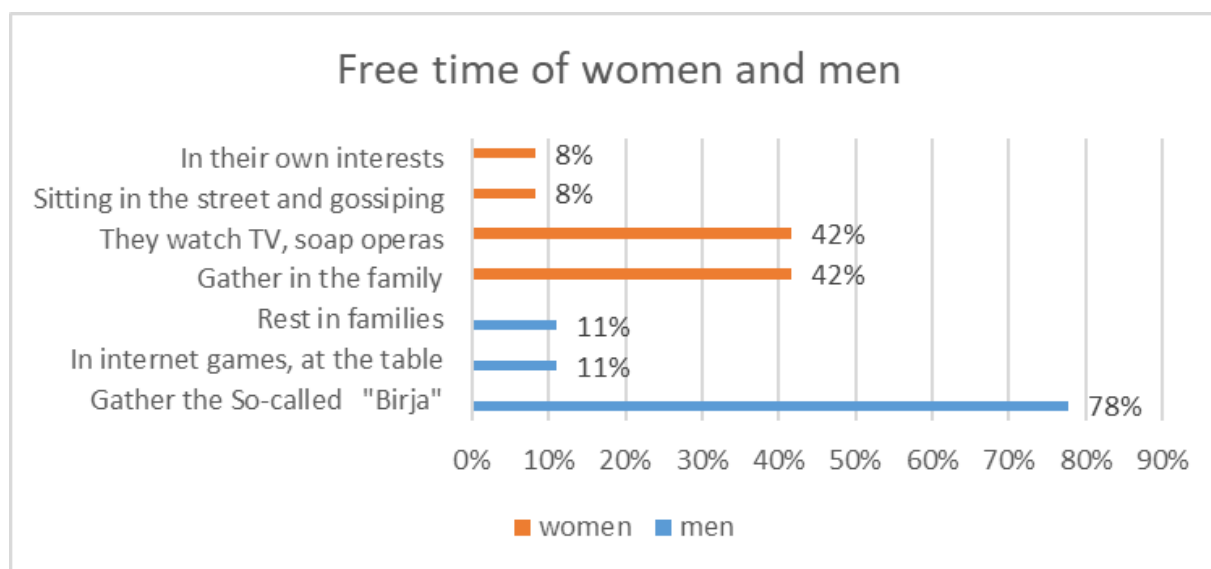


Chart 12 Free time of women and men

Practically women spend the most of their free time at home/doing the household duties. It is noteworthy that they hardly ever use the internet or social networks.

As for youth and children, although no gender disaggregated data has been available, the evidence shows that the majority of youth spend their free time at “Birzhas”, drive a car, play football (usually male), while children mainly surf the internet and social networks (which might involve both girls and boys).

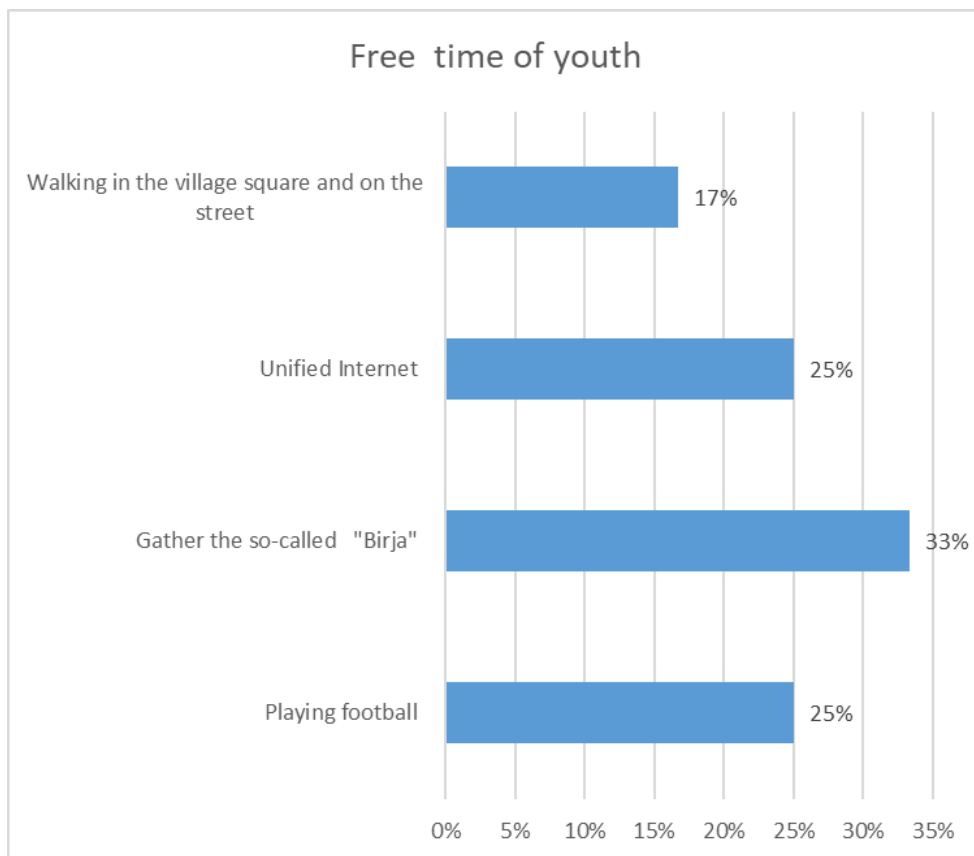


Chart 13 Free time of youth

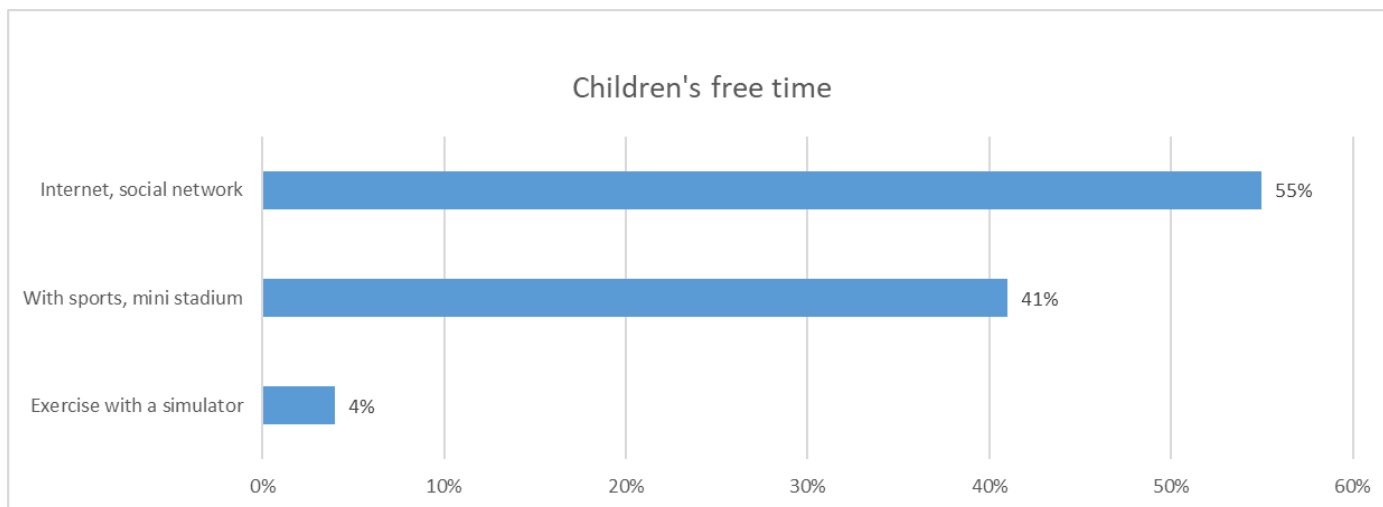


Chart 14 Children's free time

The municipality usually celebrates religious days, both Orthodox and Muslim, amid the religious diversity of its population. Some of the religious celebrations are accompanied by cultural events, which includes mainly sports activities like horse riding, wrestling, again involving men/boys.

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 and Access to Healthcare Services

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

The Administration (Executive Body) representatives provided us with the information about the 22 villages out of a total of 46 and a City of Sagarejo. Based on the information, there are hospitals in 17 villages, while in 6 villages there are none, therefore the locals receive the healthcare services from a neighboring village. No data about the remaining villages is available at all. The representatives of Administration (Executive Body) mainly positively assess the infrastructure at the village hospitals but in certain cases there is insufficient number of health workers, in particular nurses, while the hospitals have problems with sewerage systems.

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 mainly positively assessed, but timely service and the quality (in the village of Ujarma) remains a challenge.

Out of the 46 villages, the Administration (Executive Body) representative provided the information about 21 and the City of Sagarejo according to which there are pharmacies in 6 villages and the City of Sagarejo. In 15 villages, the population uses the pharmacies in nearby municipal centers or neighboring villages, which are often remote.

According to the information provided by the Administration (Executive Body) representatives, there are no screening programs in the villages and the City of Sagarejo. Therefore, the rural population can only receive the service in Tbilisi.

80% of the local women of the municipality prefer to give birth in Tbilisi, other 20% - in municipal center of Sagarejo or Telavi and Gurjaani.

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, 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 source of income in the Sagarejo municipality and includes viticulture, cereal crop production, gardening and livestock/poultry.

Viticulture is considered the most profitable activity (48%) in the villages of Sagarejo municipality, followed by livestock/poultry (33%).

58% of the Administration (Executive Body) representatives consider that agricultural duties are equally distributed between men and women, while 42% consider that men hold 20-40% of the responsibilities.

Considering that viticulture is believed to be the most profitable rural activity in Sagarejo municipality, we can assume that women earn relatively less than men.

In horticulture, which mainly involves women, the overall size of the gardens is relatively small (0.05-0.1 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, tomato (30%), corn, beans (20%), pepper (10%), onion (18%), garlic (14%), potato (11%), melon, pumpkin (2%), herbs, etc (4%). Horticultural products satisfy 39% of the demands of the families.

Agronomic services are available for 42% of the villages. Irrigation water is available for only 12% of the villages; in 17% of the villages it is partly available, while in 71% of the villages it is not available at all. Irrigation water is available or partly available on plots of land.

38% of the rural population has no access to information about the modern technologies, 32% receives information from internet, 15% receives information from consultancy services available in the town, while 15% - from public meetings/meetings with the population.

Apart from the agricultural activities (29%), the Administration (Executive Body) representatives say there are no other job opportunities, 24% of the rural population is employed in brigades (mainly women, who take care of vineyard), 23.5% is employed in tourism sector, 12% works at wine factories, and 12% of rural population is employed at public service, hospitals, security service, etc.

According to the Administration (Executive Body) representatives, the monthly income of the rural population is rather low and ranges between GEL 150-450. The Administration (Executive Body) representatives at the administrative units consider that the income of men relatively exceeds the income of women (around 14%).

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 (78%), 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).

⁵ UNDP (2020). Human Development Report 2020 /UNDP, New York, 2020.
<https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr2020.pdf>

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 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

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

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

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, men 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 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 acquisition 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

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>

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>

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

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>

¹⁹ <https://www.rda.gov.ge/en>.

In addition, there is established the **Multistakeholder Municipal Land Degradation (LD) Working Group of Sagarejo Municipality**. The Working Group was established in 2019 by order of the Mayor of Sagarejo 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 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 Sagarejo 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 11 members on the Working Group, of whom only 3 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 Sagarejo 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

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/

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 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 6 below).

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

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 6 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.

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.

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>

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*

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

7), where Sagarejo Municipality is located.

Table 7 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 Sagarejo 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. Sagarejo 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.

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.

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 Differences in Access to Productive Resources

Women and men are differently affected by difficulties in access to resources in the most municipalities (incl. Sagarejo 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. Sagarejo 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. Sagarejo 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% 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

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

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. Sagarejo 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 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 Sagarejo Municipality in the Kakheti Region in the section below:

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>

- *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.

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>

- *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 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

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>

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.

- *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-

⁴¹ UN Women (2016). Georgia: Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems.
<https://dSPACE.nplq.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/156815/1/GenderAssessmentOfAgricultureAndDevelopmentSystems.pdf>

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.

Recommendations for Advancing SLM and LDN in Sagarejo 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 **Sagarejo 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 **Sagarejo 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.

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

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

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>

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 **Sagarejo 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 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.

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>

Comprehensive Municipal Gender Mainstreaming Activity Plan in SLM-LDN for Sagarejo 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 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 Sagarejo 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). Ethnic minority dominated villages need particular attention because the number of children is high there and they need to have access to kindergartens;
- Increase access to healthcare services, involve rural population in screening programs, introduce preventive interventions at rural hospitals;
- 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.
- Ensure access to information and municipal services, especially in ethnic minority dominated villages where the population, especially women, face language barriers;
- Raise gender awareness of the Administration (Executive Body) representatives in order to improve their ability to provide gender disaggregated data and better analyze the needs of girls/boys, women/men.