

# Empowering women and communities by participatory and sustainable water management



UN Women Kyrgyzstan / Dildora Khamidova

## Equal access to safe water

FinWaterWEI II aims at enhancing water security in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through equitable and integrated management of water resources. Mobilizing women and mainstreaming gender considerations in water management in different levels is a cross cutting objective in the programme.

FinWaterWEI II promotes a rights-based approach to water use and water management. The programme has supported in all 13 projects addressing four interlinked themes. Here we highlight the results of four projects implemented within the theme: Improved capacity of rights holders - including the poorest and other vulnerable groups - to understand and realise their rights and responsibilities towards waters.

The other programme themes include: Improved application of integrated management of water resources and strengthened basis for transboundary cooperation; Reinforced capacity of the water, environment and health administrations to monitor the quality and quantity status of waters; and Enhanced adaptive capacity and preparedness towards climate variability and change in the areas supported by the interventions.

# Livelihoods through participation and equal access to water

The project facilitated change and empowerment through the education of school children and developed management tools for communities and water users' associations, strengthening the livelihoods, healthy living and sustainable use of natural resources.

UN Women's study module for secondary school children - **My Prosperous Farm** - was revised to address water and sanitation issues in depth. Through the course the students improved their knowledge and understanding of agricultural production based on effective, efficient and sustainable use of water and natural resources, as well as the basics of marketing and business planning in the market economy. They applied their knowledge in their kitchen garden plots by growing profitable crops adding to nutrition and income of their families and preparing them for a bright a future in their villages as an alternative to migration and early marriage due to poverty.

The youth empowerment and tolerance course **My Safe and Peaceful School** guided children on human rights and duties as enshrined in the Constitution, as well as the benefits of gender equality and girl empowerment. The students carried out advocacy actions in their communities to raise awareness of the ill-effects of bride-kidnapping and early marriage, and the right of all villagers to fair access to water. As a result, the water user associations were strengthened and gained new members and improved their services and collection of fees.

Municipal governments were supported through introduction of an e-government system called '**AIMAK**'. It provides for systematic collection and management of data, ensuring better targeting of social allowances to the vulnerable. Potentially excluded population groups, such as female headed households and disabled, are now captured in the municipalities' database. The GIS interface allows visualization of data needed for effective water management. Systematic data management provides for transparent billing and fee collection by the water user association and will underpin data collection for the SDG I localisation.

*"Having participated in My Prosperous Farm component, I became interested in taking care of our families' kitchen garden. I now take an interest in bazaar's prices in relation to vegetables I wish to sell. I also learnt how to solve problems by creating and implementing specific plans."*

- Zhyrgalbek Erlan uulu



SYKE / Tea Törnroos 2017

- **Two** peer education **study modules** for young people aged between 14 and 17 years adopted in the national school curriculum.
- **1,640 students** of whom 48 % girls, from 14 schools completed the My Prosperous Farm course and successfully passed tests in marketing, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), conflict mitigation and the effective management of water resources. **13** schools have improved WASH facilities.
- **1,330** students and **59** teachers received seeds and planted crops in their kitchen gardens.
- Compared with the average, the students received **yields 60% higher** from their kitchen gardens (cucumbers no less than 87 %!). For every SOM invested, they received three times the profit.
- **1,550 students** of whom 62 % girls, including 90 peer educators, completed the My Safe and Peaceful School course.
- **44,400 people** were reached through advocacy campaigns on the effective use of land and water resources and WASH through "door-to-door" initiatives the students made.
- **Over 18,000** water users including 3,540 from vulnerable groups have improved their access to irrigation water.
- **14 Self-help groups** of vulnerable women with one member being better off sharing their knowledge were created consisting of 170 women members in total.

*"I have gained knowledge of human rights and entrepreneurship skills. We have learnt to build teams of girls and boys with different views, ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs. Today we work together to tackle problems such as early marriage, bride kidnapping and domestic violence, and teach respect for diversity in our communities."*

- Diana Ruslan kyzy.

# Community-Driven Water Supply and Sanitation

The CoDWSS-project bridged the empowerment of women in water related decision making from the local level to the policy level. A Gender Working Group was established in December 2015 and led by the Committee of Women and Family Affairs.

The project brought safe drinking water to thousands. It significantly impacted to the reduced domestic burden and saving in time of people, women and children in particular.

Water Trust Funds were established for the construction of water supply systems and they continue to serve as skilled operators in further investments.

*“Water is a national wealth and we must value it. A rational use of every drop of water and timely payment is very important - it contributes to a change of people’s mindset towards water in the long run.”*

*- Mr Muhamadrahim Yusufi,  
Head of Rudaki Hukumat District*



OXFAM / P.Thiriet 2015

- In all more than **8,000 people** (1,330 households) gained access to safe drinking water on their premises.
- The time spent for water collection was reduced from **60 mins to zero** in six targeted villages.
- Proper new latrines with hand washing stands were built at **four schools**. School attendance rates increased, particularly among girls.
- **Water Safety Plans** were developed for both Drinking Water User Associations established. Collection of water fees was organized and tools to monitor consumer satisfaction were introduced.
- **11,000 people** were trained in hygiene and sanitation.

Tajikistan: Rudaki and Ayni, 2015–2018, implementation by Oxfam, Tajikistan (oaliyev@oxfam.org.uk) Finland's contribution: 999,000 €



## Water safety planning for good water quality

Water safety planning (WSP) is a risk-based management approach, which is recommended by WHO as the most effective means of ensuring safe drinking-water.

WSPs lead to better management, operation, monitoring and public health surveillance of water supplies. WSPs apply to large utilities and small village facilities.

The WSP approach was applied in ten demonstration villages in rural Tajikistan. A group of eight national WSP facilitators was trained to guide the work locally.

The demonstration projects proved that WSP is an effective and workable tool. It will be adopted in the new Tajiki drinking water law. The project further supports long-term policy uptake of the WSP approach by a national WSP roadmap and a practical guideline, which may also serve as models for the neighboring countries.

- **Support** to improving and upgrading of water supply systems in rural areas.
- **Improvement in service levels** of water supply – particularly regarding water safety in the ten project villages.
- **Water quality** monitoring in project areas.
- **Drinking-water quality surveillance** authorities were trained and provided with new laboratory equipment.
- In each of the ten villages three members were **trained on WSPs** and staff of five surveillance agencies on water quality monitoring.

Tajikistan: Ayni, Danghara, Farkhor, Fayzabad and Varzob, 2016–2018, implementation by World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe (schmollo@who.int), Finland's contribution: 505,000 €



SYKE / Anssi Karppinen 2018

## Building resilience of women and communities to climate change

In the remote and mountainous area of Tajikistan, people, and women in particular, are vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. In many villages, access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a pressing problem, which is exacerbated by climate change through the melting of glaciers causing dwindling water reserves.

New skills, knowledge and facilities are needed in the communities to improve their resilience and livelihoods. Participatory governance practices and collaborative planning ensure that everyone is heard and involved in resilience building activities. A wide, comprehensive palette of actions was taken to improve community living conditions and livelihoods, in order to increase climate change resilience among women in particular.

- **4,300 people** have direct access to safe drinking water through new water supply systems
- **15** Water User Committees established and trained to operate and manage the new water supply systems
- **100 households** with 500 people have access to improved private latrines (ecosan toilets) and hand washing facilities
- **20 sites covered** by village development planning and hazard vulnerability risk assessments mapping natural hazards threatening water supply infrastructure and communities
- **15** Community Health Promoters and primary healthcare staff trained on hygiene and sanitation
- **More than 1,000 people** trained in climate resilience and disaster risk management
- **Over 50** community awareness raising sessions conducted for 637 participants to promote hygienic, sanitary, and responsible behavior
- **More than 140 sub-projects** implemented demonstrating sustainable natural resource management and disaster risk reduction, such as riverbank enforcement for flood protection, and forestation of hill slopes, establishment of tree nurseries and terracing to combat erosion
- **3 public buildings** thermal insulated and equipped with fuel-efficient stoves to promote energy efficiency

Tajikistan: Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (Ishkashim, Rushan and Murghab), 2015–2017  
 Implementation by Aga Khan Foundation, Tajikistan (akf.dushanbe@akdn.org), Finland's contribution: 500,000 €



*“What motivates me to be here? I'm a young women specialist in chemistry and I'm happy to be engaged in the laboratory work – daily water samplings, analysis and records. I'm still learning from other women colleagues, they are of course more experienced. I know how fast we move towards innovative solutions and technologies, especially when it refers to the work I do. And I hope I can learn more through sharing knowledge, skills and experiences. ICI Project provides with new ways of thinking, introducing methods and skills, and I feel myself very confident when participate in the activities - sampling, testing, laboratory performance and electronic database.”*

-Ms. Rukhshona Gulmurodzoda