

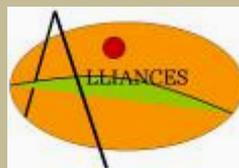
A Summary of the Role of Women in Farming in 7 Villages in the Samstkhe Javakheti Region of Georgia



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Abstract

The Swiss Development Corporation-Funded, Mercy Corps-run Alliances Program is a market development program focussed on the livestock sub-sector in the municipalities of Adigeni, Akhaltsikhe and Aspindza in the Samstkhe-Javakheti region of Georgia. The livestock sector is dominated by dairy and beef production and the area is characterised by a population comprising of approximately 20% ethnic Armenians. Akhaltsikhe town is the main municipal hub and principal market town of the project area and the region as a whole.

As part of its inception phase, the program carried out a wide reaching survey from December 2008 until March 2009, with 2,800 respondents using a closed ended household questionnaire to determine the nature of farm income and the exact role of livestock in the lives of the program target group: small-scale livestock producers.

A deeper understanding of gender and its implications for the role of women engaged in livestock farming was considered necessary to augment the survey's findings, and by extension, to hone the planned areas of program intervention. The processing and sale of milk products was known to be primarily the remit of women and was likely to be the target of several program interventions and therefore the program sought to identify the potential effects these interventions might have on the role of women.

In April 2009, focus groups were therefore held in seven villages of the three municipalities covered in the program area. Of the seven villages two were Armenian villages in order to try and capture any potential differences between the Georgian and Armenian populations. Two focus groups, one comprised of women and one of men, each of 4-5 individuals were held in each village. An open-ended questionnaire was utilized (Annex 1) and a seasonal calendar was developed in each group (three examples of which are in Annex 2). In addition to building a picture of the division of labour in terms of activities and responsibilities related to livestock management, processing and marketing, the interviewers sought to understand the prioritisation of those activities and detail other activities carried out by women relating to housework and childcare. Furthermore the focus groups sought to gain broader insight into women's lives by looking at age, wealth and opportunities for leisure. Where possible the influence of ethnicity was considered based on a comparison of findings between the two Armenian and five Georgian villages.

During the course of the focus groups the open ended questions of the questionnaire were utilised as prompts and discussion often diversified into opinion and narration of experience beyond the confines of the prompts. These discussions have been summarized and collated into the sections of the report. The seasonal calendars provide the detailed definition in terms of activities and quantification in terms of hours of labour, of the role of women.

Gender was found to profoundly influence the activities carried out by, and the responsibilities assumed and meted out to, men and women. Physical strength was found to be the main criteria stated by the focus groups underpinning the division of roles related to farming, with men undertaking larger time bound operations related to the land such as ploughing or fencing, activities requiring greater physical strength such as hauling carcasses and butchery and one time large scale transactions such as the sale of livestock or large portions of harvest. Women tended to be responsible for activities which although seasonally

bound tended to consist of more sustained activities over time such as weeding, milking, harvesting, food processing and weekly marketing. It was generally agreed by both male and female groups that women tended to work harder as, in addition to their farm related activities and processing for which they hold almost sole responsibility; their work was extended to household activities when the men could stop.

The opinions of the respondents seemed to bear out the assumption by project staff and the impressions gleaned from the inception survey that many farm women hold positions of leadership in the management of the farm. Where women were outright leaders and heads of family and became primarily responsible for decision making it was found however to be generally due to the absence, illness, incapacity or death of the male head of the household. Where the male head is present it was found that women often hold the de facto decision making responsibility for the family, particularly concerning the education of children and activities related to day to day household finances but that larger decisions were taken jointly or with the corroboration of the male head of the family.

What could not be determined under the scope of this survey was to identify or quantify whether there had been an increase in this responsibility, if so the scale of the increase, the factors determining it and a definition of the areas of increased responsibility and decision making. Further definition of these aforementioned areas, of what constitutes power in the farming family and an investigation into the dynamics of power and gender in the farming communities of Samstkhe-Javakheti are recommended to enable the better shaping of project interventions and activities.

Furthermore the effects of the 2005 Food Safety Act (to be enacted in 2010) and the likely cessation of the on-farm production of cheese in favour of the sale of liquid milk¹, on households and on the decision making remit/responsibility/power of women if they are removed from the cheese production and selling transaction, should be further investigated.

1. Introduction: Defining the Role

'Women play an important role in every household.'

Mr. Gevork Eknosian Shivilisi Village Respondent

During the inception period survey of the Mercy Corps Alliances Program of 2,800 respondents it became apparent that a more focused definition of the roles of women in the farming communities of the program area was necessary to inform the development of program interventions for the Mercy Corps Alliances Program which would help determine the final efficacy of the program itself. In particular the program was formulating interventions based on a possible transition from cheese making at the farm level to the collection and sale of liquid milk. It was known prior to the survey that milk processing and cheese making were the remit of women and it was imperative therefore that there should be a greater understanding of the particulars of the role including the question of what women would do should cheese making and sale be removed from their list of activities.

¹ The Act means that food producers will have to gain safety and compliance certification beyond the capacity of home producers which will effectively remove food processing from the home to the commercial sphere resulting in farmers selling their liquid milk to processors.

In addition to detailing the work carried out by women, a general finding of the inception survey was that the responsibility of women in the farm household was far reaching with many women encountered during the survey playing a leading role in farm management. There was also a more general belief expressed by respondents in the survey and the project staff that ‘things had changed’ in Georgia in terms of the position of women and their participation in decision making in particular, which prompted a desire to further investigate what if anything this meant for the women farmers in the project area.

The division of labour of agricultural activities in the village of Tsinubani-Gurkeli a village of 140 families, 22km from Akhaltsikhe, was described in an NRI study conducted in 2002³.

‘Land cultivation is carried out by household members, with some exchange labour between households used for sowing. There is a division of labour by gender for some tasks; men perform relatively hard work, including manual tillage of the land, mowing of hay for feeding cattle in the winter, and sawing and cutting of wood for winter. Women are responsible for processing crops for storage. Women and men together are involved in less strenuous activities such as weeding and watering, with some assistance from children. The only mechanization in agriculture is ploughing, which is carried out by renting a tractor.’⁴

Research into the position of women in Georgia has pointed to a shift in the participation of women in decision making in the household but without a consequent external shift in the devolution of power in legislative or economic decision making. In 2007 the Heinrich Boll Foundation commissioned a report⁵ on the relationship between gender and democratisation from 1991-2006. The report noted the strength of the impact of political and economic changes on women including the number of women becoming primary breadwinners in the household, this had not however been matched by a consequent involvement by women in the legislative and executive branches of government or in the economic life of the country. With particular relevance perhaps to the situation of farm women in the program area it noted that,

‘Despite the fact that in many households women have become the primary breadwinners, their better adaptability and survival skills have not facilitated their transition from the private to the public domain.’⁶

2. Methodology: The Focus Group Survey

The focus group survey was implemented in seven villages of the program chosen to reflect varying distances from the market, which it was felt would help ensure the fullest range of farm related activities. Two villages in Aspindza municipality, two villages in Adigeni municipality and three villages in Akhaltsikhe municipality were selected two of which were Armenian. The villages were selected to reflect different distances from Akhaltsikhe, the main market hub. Two focus groups were held in each village one for men and one for

³ Kobladze K, (2002) *Non Farm Livelihood Activities in Three Villages in Different Regions of Georgia: Results of qualitative fieldwork carried out during baseline phase of qualitative research.* Natural Resources Institute.

⁴ p6, *ibid.*

⁵ Sabedashvili T, (2007) *Gender and Democratization: the Case of Georgia 1991-2006.* Heinrich Boll Foundation.

⁶ p36, *ibid.*

women. It was decided to hold a male focus group as well as a female focus group to help build a picture of the role, position and contribution of women from a male perspective.

The focus groups comprised of 4-5 people each and were organized by the village representatives in each village. The two Armenian villages were interviewed to attempt to capture any differences in practice, activities and attitude between Armenian and Georgian villages. A further focus group of meat and dairy produce traders was organized to augment the information of women's role in marketing.

A checklist of open ended questions was used as a prompt list in each focus group. The questions on the checklist itself formulated to obtain and augment information pertaining to the role of women that had not been ascertained from the closed ended questions of the general survey. Interviews took place in the building of village Sakrebulo and lasted for 2 hours and a seasonal calendar was then developed for each village.

Box 1: Summary of the selected villages

1. Rustavi village is in Aspindza municipality, 15km from Akhaltsikhe market⁷. The population is Georgian; with a minority Adjaran population. Rustavi is known for livestock and vegetable production, especially tomatoes and peppers.
2. Tmogvi village is also in Aspindza municipality, 75 km from Akhaltsikhe market. The population is Georgian. Tmogvi is known for livestock and vegetable production, particularly the production of cucumbers for pickling with a market in Akhalkalaki Tmogvi's nearest market and main town.
3. Zanavi village is in Adigeni municipality 30km from Akhaltsikhe market mostly populated by Adjaran people; the village is known for livestock and potato growing.
4. Varkhani village is in Adigeni municipality, 20km from Akhaltsikhe market. The population is Georgian and is involved in livestock and vegetable production.
5. Atskuri⁸ village is in Akhaltsikhe municipality, 24km from Akhaltsikhe market with a mainly Georgian population involved in livestock and vegetable production.
6. Tskaltbila⁹ village is one of the Armenian villages in Akhaltsikhe municipality, and is 24km from Akhaltsikhe market. Potato and livestock production are the main agricultural activities.
7. Skhvilisi¹⁰ village is in Akhaltsikhe municipality; and is five km from Akhaltsikhe market. This village is divided into two parts: Zemo Skhvilisi and Kvemo Skhvilisi. Kvemo Skhvilisi where the focus group was conducted is populated by Armenians. The village is well known for potato production and livestock production.

3. Summation of the Focus Group Responses

It was found during the focus groups that the discussion tended to deviate from the questions into particular aspects of women's experience and activities and into opinions and reflections. These have been collated and categorized into the sections below to provide a qualitative summary and picture of the role of women as perceived by both Georgian and Armenian men and women in the survey area. The three example seasonal calendars in Annex 2 provide a quantitative measure of women's role in farming in terms of hours worked per activity.

⁷ Akhaltsikhe market is the main market for livestock and crop production in the survey area.

⁸ Five women 30, 40,45,55,70 and four men, three 25 year olds and one 55 year old.

⁹ Three women, 40,50,60 years old and four men from 30 to 50years old.

¹⁰ Four women 30, 40 and 60 and five men 30-60. The other focus groups had similar ranges of ages.

3.1 General Overview: Myriad Roles

‘Women always do more than men, in my family I am the woman and man at the same time.’
Female Respondent, Atskuri Village

‘The role of women is so important and encompassing in family and farming, that without them we could do nothing. We have to say that they are leaders in it.’
Mr. Jemal Mskhvilidze, Atskuri Village

‘We do everything together, we support each other in various activities, but of course the hard work is done by us.’
Male Respondent, Atskuri Village

The women interviewed in the focus groups lead hard daily lives. They were found to be involved in and often responsible for the majority of the on farm and off farm related activities which included animal husbandry, land cultivation (excluding ploughing and harrowing), harvesting, food processing and marketing in addition to housekeeping and looking after the family. Often the day for farm women interviewed starts at 6am with milking¹¹ and sending the cows¹² with the herd and ended as late as 11pm with washing or food preparation. The day is then filled with extensive activities in myriad roles; as mother, cook, cleaner, processor, market vendor, gardener and livestock producer. In addition many houses lack piped water and water collection is often a daily chore.



Land cultivation activities vary according to season. In spring women join men in sowing and fertilizer application, in the summer with hoeing, weeding and irrigation and in late summer and autumn with harvesting. Moreover as vegetables and fruit are harvested women are responsible for preserving them through bottling, pickling, drying and jam and condiment making in preparation for the severe winter. Year round women look after animals including chickens and pigs as well as milking the cows twice a day in season (April-November). Women then process cheese from the milk¹³. They are usually¹⁴ responsible for mucking out as well as feeding and watering animals.

¹¹ Milking is seasonal. There is usually a three month break in milk production ranging from October to January.

¹² In the survey area cow ownership averages between 3 and 4 breeding females who join a communal herd which is taken to communal pastures in the day time. Herding responsibility is divided between the families whose animals comprise the herd. The herder is usually male.

¹³ Some families sell liquid milk rather than cheese. However even those families that sell liquid milk will still produce cheese for home consumption. Milk will be processed when bulked milk enables the making of a minimum of 2kg of cheese which equates to 16litres of milk. Milk is generally made in the morning after the milking. Families with only one or two cows may bulk their milk together in a reciprocal agreement in an economy of scale.

¹⁴ It was found that Armenian men not women usually did the mucking out if they were present and not in Russia.



Men are mostly responsible for seasonally specific time bound jobs requiring greater physical strength including major land cultivation such as ploughing, harrowing and planting, hay production and gathering, irrigation repair, maintenance and construction, harvesting and wood supply and storage. In terms of processing men are responsible for the slaughter and butchery of larger animals and alcohol production¹⁵. The majority of men in the focus groups did however admit that women work harder for one main reason: they explained that normally, women and men go to the fields together

for land cultivation and harvesting but on returning home women must do the housekeeping and cooking whilst men eat and rest.

3.2 Priority Activities

Feeding and watering livestock, milking cows and sending them to the herd and processing the milk are the main priorities. Housekeeping follows, before going to the field along with the men for activities related to land cultivation as the season requires. When the cows come back from the herd milking is again prioritized followed by housekeeping and cheese production either in the late evening or the next morning. On the weekends, primarily Sundays, women go to the market to trade with different produce. Twice a week (sometimes more) women are busy with bread making. Food preservation is prioritized according to when it is ripe and ready to be processed. Women are comparatively free in the wintertime, when they do not need to go in the field, preserve food or do the milking but women in the survey stated that the time quickly becomes filled with other home related activities.

3.3 Women's Role in Production

Women play a pivotal role in production. Dairy produce forms the main and most important area of production. In the milking season, women make local farm cheese, *Sulguni*¹⁶ cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese, ghee and butter for home consumption, retail¹⁷ and wholesale¹⁸. Women also produce fruit vodka's, fruit cookies, *tklapi*¹⁹, *churchkhella*²⁰ and jam for which there is a high demand in the market. Women are involved in bee keeping and the processing and sale of honey and are also involved in the collection of medicinal herbs, plants and preparations, which are used in domestically and also sold. Fruit and vegetables are pickled and bottled from late spring until late autumn.



¹⁵ Wine and *chacha*: Georgia 'vodka' distilled in backyard stills from grape must.

¹⁶ *Sulguni* cheese is a type of Georgian cheese with a higher fat content and requires more extensive processing than ordinary farm cheese.

¹⁷ Taken for sale in the market.

¹⁸ Bought by intermediaries at the farm gate.

¹⁹ *Tklapi*: fruit leather; fruit juice dried and pressed to form sheets

²⁰ *Churchkhella* are nuts on a string repeatedly dipped in grape juice and dried to form a popular snack once used by Georgian soldiers as they keep indefinitely.

3.4. Women in Marketing

“I have been involved in cheese marketing for 20 years and I find this job rather difficult, but I have no other choice. I need the money to support my family. For this purpose, I get up at 6-7AM in the morning to get the bus, then I stand in the market in the cheese section for a long time. Then I go back and do house-keeping. The worst is in the winter period, as I am a quite old now and it is unbearable sometimes to stand in a cold, frosty whether, but I can do nothing with it, it is the only source of income in my family. Sometimes I wish my husband would do this to know how much I suffer in support to my family”.

Mrs. Makvala, Atskuri Village

Women play a major role in marketing the products they make. Many women go to the market and sell their goods. On the way home, when they have sold their produce, they buy commodities for their families. Men are also involved in marketing, but mostly when selling large volumes of produce such as potatoes which must be transported by car or truck. Men are also mostly involved in the sale of livestock often involving a walk to the market with their cattle from their villages, which can exceed 30km, spending the night in Akhaltsikhe and walking home the next day.

During the survey period Akhaltsikhe market was visited to observe how the marketing role was divided between men and women. Both women and men sell vegetables, fruits, herbs, nuts and other similar products. The main division identified was that women were responsible for selling cheese and dairy products and men for selling meat. The reason cited for this by both dairy and meat traders was that the sale of cheese, milk, sour cream and other dairy products are less physically demanding than the hauling of carcasses and butchery required when selling meat. Women noted however that the sale of dairy products is hard work for them.

3.5 Decision Making

‘In the Soviet Union time, men used to lead families and take all the decisions. In my family, my father was always the one who would have the final word. Now things are different. My wife and I have equal rights and opportunities due to the development processes and civilization. Now times are different and we live in the modern world. It does not mean that my mother was oppressed, but that was the tradition and rule of life. I always try to keep my wife away from hard fieldwork. When I go to the field, to gather hay with my friends, my wife stays at home at prepares food for us. I know many families though where men just stand at Birja²¹ and talk and when they go home take decisions although women do the most of the work..’

Young male respondent, Atskuri Village

In rural families, larger decisions are mostly taken jointly. Women sometimes take larger decisions based on the needs of the family, but with the corroboration of the male head of the family. When a woman sells produce in the market however she can buy goods for family independently, as she knows what is required for the household. In one of the Armenian villages, all male respondents admitted that in their families, money is always kept with women and that they can spend it independently, as they know better what goods are required at home. Men have confidence in their wives and are sure that women will not spend money ‘unwisely’.

²¹ *Birja* are the groups of men to be observed throughout Georgia congregated at the side of the road, chatting.

A different picture however was obtained in Zanavi village where the majority of the population is Ajarian and considered more conservative. Even though the men there admitted that women are doing hard and valuable work, men consider decision making their remit. The village priest attended the focus group interview in Zanavi and elucidated the position of the bible and Christianity.



'Women and Men are equal in front of God - but the church empowers men to lead families. Everybody here agrees with the fact that women play very important role in farming and housekeeping. God created both a man and a woman to be 'one soul and one body', but the man is the one who has to lead a family on the right way.'

Priest, Zanavi Village

3.6 Women of Different Ages

Generally, women become involved in farming in their late twenties and thirties. This trend was observed in Georgian as well as Armenian villages. Women until their late twenties and thirties have responsibilities which prevent them from becoming fully involved in farming. Education²² is the priority, followed by marriage and looking after a new family; bringing up the children and supervising their education. They may also have outside jobs as teachers, pharmacists, shop assistants or bureaucratic positions in the municipality. In their thirties, when their children are older and their own mother older they may become more involved in the management of the farm. The majority of women playing the main roles in farming are more usually however in their forties and fifties. At this point older daughters help their mothers with the house keeping leaving older women with more farming experience freer for farming activities. According to the respondents, women are commonly in charge of farming due to their experience and aptitude and a tendency for men as they get older to become less active or weak. In many cases, women become the head of the farm through necessity where their husbands are away, incapacitated or deceased.

3.7 Wealth

'We do not let our daughters work in the field, because they will work hard in their life after they get married, so while they stay with parents they can enjoy their life and take a good rest.'

Female Respondent, Skhvilisi Village

'In poorer families and poorer villages people go to field when they become 13-15 years old. I know many families whose children go to the field and work as hard as their parents work. This village is a well-off village and here many people hire labourers to do the heavy work and that's why young people do not go to the field.'

Mrs. Marina, Skhvilisi Village

The age at which women become involved in farming is closely linked to the relative wealth of the family. In poorer households women work harder and wealthier families hire labourers. The poorer families cannot afford to hire labourers and often work as farm labourers themselves.

²² Younger children are often actively involved in farming. However the top priority for most of the families is the education of their children. Parents put all they can afford into sending their children away for a better higher education.

There were notable differences in wealth between the women in the two Armenian villages in the survey. Tskaltbila village is comparatively less well off than Skhvilisi²³ village with many of the men working in Russia as labourers which necessitates that women carry out all farm activities themselves. The women of Tskaltbila village are hired by nearby villages including Skhvilisi village for approximately 15 GEL²⁴ per day particularly during the potato harvest.

3.8 Differences Between the Armenian²⁵ and Georgian Villages

Our life is different now; our husbands travel a lot to Russia to work. There they see how men treat women and behave accordingly when they come back. Now our women have rights in education, leisure time, shopping. Nearly every family has somebody in Russia, either husbands or children either working or studying. Remittances form a big part of the family financial resources, due to which they are able to hire labourers for land cultivation to support women.

Mrs. Marina resident of Skhvilisi Village

The researchers had held the assumption, based on their perceptions of Georgian and Armenian cultures, that Georgian farm women would have a lighter workload and greater degree of emancipation than Armenian farm women. They were unprepared therefore the comparison of the seasonal calendars which showed that the Georgian women of the survey do more work than the majority of the Armenian women surveyed.

Like the Georgian women of the survey, the Armenian women of Skhvilisi village milk cows and make cheese however they do not send cattle to the herd or muck out or chop wood. In the poorer Armenian village Tskaltbila too, if men are present, women are not expected to muck out or chop wood. As in the Georgian villages, the women do the housekeeping and go to the field to help with cultivation and harvesting. However, many of the families of Shkvilisi are better off due to remittances from Russia and can afford to hire labour for land cultivation and harvesting.

Aside from relative wealth and its effect on workload, decisions in Armenian families in both villages as in Georgian villages tended to be made jointly with women sometimes taking the lead. The Armenian women in the focus groups admitted that in the past they used to have a harder life due to the dictates of Armenian traditions concerning men as the head of families and as the decision makers. According to the focus groups however things have changed a lot. The women surveyed felt that their rights have increased, that they have full independence over money and can spend it as and when required, without informing their husbands in advance. This change was explained by being near to Akhaltsikhe and the development processes initiated by INGO's over the years and by visits to Russia, which has affected not only the thinking of men, but the well-being of families in general.

²³ Many men from Skhvilisi village also work in Russia but in higher status and higher skilled jobs as foremen rather than labourers or as traders or other forms of commercial activity. Many men have also been to Russia and come back and a new generation of older sons and daughters are going to Russia for education. Perhaps one reason for the difference in wealth between the two villages is that Skhvilisi village is at a later stage of economic development/relationship with Russia than Tskaltbila village. Skhvilisi village has a good access road and is 4km from Akhaltsikhe; Tskaltbila is much further from Akhaltsikhe with poor access.

²⁴ Georgian Lari the unit of currency in the Republic of Georgia at the time of writing 1 lari = 2.5 euro.

²⁵ Only two Armenian villages were included in the survey and one village is comparatively richer than the other and perhaps some of the Georgian villages in the survey so it is unclear whether differences are due to wealth or culture. Comparison would have to be made more closely between Armenian and Georgian villages of comparatively similar wealth to enable a clearer analysis of any differences.

3.9 Opportunities and Leisure Time

'We are too overloaded, we work hard, but what can we do, it is required for our families. Women in rural areas will never have free time; time saved from any activity will be spent on other activity.'

Mrs. Mzia Kbilashvili, Varkhani village,

'I dream about the day when I can have free time to sleep and have a good rest at the sea side. I am in my sixties and do not remember when I went somewhere for holidays. I think that we all deserve good leisure time at least for couple of days. We have forgotten that we are women and we want relaxation.'

Female respondent, Atskuri Village



All of the women interviewed felt that they are overloaded with work and do not have any leisure time. Women very rarely go out socially. They may sometimes go to neighbours' houses in the evening or to birthday parties or may occasionally meet each other in the street and chat. The women's opinions differed on how they would use any free time that arose from for example removing the need to make cheese for sale through selling liquid milk instead. Several women thought that in their free time, they might find some other sources of an income to support to their families particularly in relation to their children's education. Others thought that there are so many things to do at home that, their free time would be spent again on housekeeping. Many

of the women said that they dream about going to seaside to have a good rest and to sleep.

Men felt that if they had a free time, they would find another profitable activity to make additional income. However they also said that they would enjoy meetings with their friends, standing at the *Birja*, playing darts, cards and having parties with lots of drinks. According to Mr. Khuta Kbilashvili of Zanavi Village,



"If I had a free time, I could find an alternate profitable, income generating jobs, or I would enjoy meetings with my friends."

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus group study was undertaken to further define the role of women in farming particularly in relation to the role of women in milk processing and cheese making and to attempt to corroborate the impression received from the general survey and the assumption by project staff that 'things have changed' in relation to the situation of women in society and that women have more responsibility and decision making power in the farming family.

Gender was found to profoundly influence the activities carried out by and the responsibilities assumed and meted out to men and women and the survey was able to quantify these activities in the seasonal calendars. Physical strength was found to be the main criteria stated by the focus groups for the division of roles related to farming with men undertaking larger time bound operations related to the land such as ploughing or fencing. Women tended to be responsible for activities which although seasonally bound tended to

consist of more sustained activities over time such as weeding, milking, harvesting and food processing. It was generally agreed that women work harder as, in addition to the farm related activities and processing for which they hold almost sole responsibility, their work is extended to household activities where the men can stop. Women were found to have very little leisure time and that should time be freed up by the lessening or cessation of an activity such as cheese making they would probably fill it with other income generating work or housekeeping. Wealth was identified as being pivotal to the involvement of women in farming and the age at which that involvement would occur as well as to the relative burden of their work with wealthier families being able to hire labourers.

The opinions of respondents seemed partially to bear out the assumption by project staff and the impressions gleaned from the inception survey that many farm women do have 'more' decision making power and responsibility in the family. What can be stated with certainty is that women are involved in the decision making process and that they sometimes lead it. Where a woman becomes the head of the household, however, this is usually due to the absence, illness, incapacity or death of the male head of the household and necessity rather than changes in society or the development process.

Apart from in Zanavi village with a majority Adjarian population where decision making was considered the remit of the male head of the household it was found that where the male head is present, decisions tended to be made jointly with women who often holding the de facto decision making responsibility for the family particularly concerning the early education of children and day to day household finances but may still require the corroboration of the male head of the family. Larger decisions including the higher education of children are taken jointly or by the head of the family. An interesting trend observed in the wealthier Armenian village of Skhivilisi was that significant changes in the position of women and the improvement of their rights and decision making power in matters such as the control of money had occurred as a result of male members of the family working and both female and male members of the family studying in Russia.

What could not be determined under the scope of this survey was to quantify whether there had been a general increase in this responsibility, if so the scale of the increase, the factors determining it and a definition of the areas of increased responsibility and decision making. Further definition of these aforementioned areas, of what constitutes power in the farming family and an investigation into the dynamics of power and gender in the farming communities of Samstkhe-Javakheti are recommended to enable the better shaping of project interventions and activities.

Furthermore new laws passed under the 2005 Food Safety Act may mean that households can no longer make and sell cheese without safety and compliance certificates which will be beyond the means of ordinary farming households and will probably result in them selling their liquid milk to processors. Moreover market opportunities are opening up in the project area due to larger processing entities becoming established. When asked what they would do with free time in the day from for example the sale of liquid milk, the women responded that they would probably find other income generating opportunities particularly in relation to their children's education or do more household tasks although they would like to have more leisure time. A further study to investigate the effects on the decision making remit/power/responsibility of women if they are removed from the cheese production and selling transaction should be undertaken.

Annex 1

Focus Group Check List

Municipality

Village

Distance From Akhaltsikhe Market

No of participants

Age range

Interviewees:

1. How are farming activities divided between household members?
2. What role do women have? Why?
3. What role do men have? Why?
4. From what age do women engage in farming activities?
5. What different roles do women have according to their age?
6. Are there households where women lead farming activities? If so why?
7. What do women produce for market?
8. How is produce marketed? Who sells the produce and why? (Do men and women sell different things?)
9. What would women do with any extra time saved from their activities? (E.g. time saved from cheese making through selling liquid milk)
10. Who takes over the farm when parents become too old and cannot lead farms?
11. Does anybody's family have non agricultural income? Are these mostly women or men?
12. Who makes the decisions about expenditure? Is the decision taken jointly or by the person who makes the money?

Annex 2: Examples of Three Seasonal Calendars Seasonal Calendar/Atskuri Village Women



Activities According Seasons	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
House Keeping: (cleaning, washing, food preparation, food processing etc)	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work, 1hr/day cheese making	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work, 1hr/day cheese making	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work, 1hr/day cheese making	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work, 1hr/day cheese making
Livestock Husbandry AM: Early in the morning women milk cows and send them to the herd and muck out. In winter women feed the animals, milk in season and muck out.	1 hour in the morning/every day	1 hour in the morning/every day	1 hour in the morning/every day	1 hour in the morning
Livestock Husbandry PM: In the evening women prepare the animal shelter and do the milking. In winter women prepare the shelter, feed the animals and milk in season.	1 hour in the evening/every day	1 hour in the evening/every day	1 hour in the evening/every day	1 hour in the evening
Land cultivation and sowing	1 week of 8hrs/day in spring			
Hoeing, sowing, fertilizer application.	Late spring/summer full and half days as and when required			
Preservation of vegetables and fruits for the winter time.	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	
Harvesting		End of summer/8hrs per day	Autumn/8hrs per day	
Chickens: (Feeding, mucking out and egg collection)	20min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)
Pigs (feeding mucking out)	30min per day (15 in the morning, 15 in the evening)	30min per day (15 in the morning, 15 in the evening)	30min per day (15 in the morning, 15 in the evening)	30min per day (15 in the morning, 15 in the evening)
Bread Baking/1-2hours	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 3 days - 1-2hrs
Wood chopping for heating and when required for baking	10-15 minutes when required for baking	10-15 minutes when required for baking	10-15 minutes when required for baking	Wood already chopped

Seasonal Calendar/Skhvilisi Village Women

Activities According Seasons	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
House Keeping (cleaning, washing, food preparation food processing including cheese making ²⁶ etc)	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work	2-3 hrs per day in between farm work
Milking cows in the morning and in the evening	30 min per day (15 in the morning and 15 in the evening)	30 min per day (15 in the morning and 15 in the evening)	30 min per day (15 in the morning and 15 in the evening)	30 min per day (15 in the morning and 15 in the evening)
Field work including land cultivation, sowing, harvesting	8 hrs per day as and when required			
Chickens(feeding, mucking out, egg collection)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)
Preserving vegetables and fruit	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	
Bread Baking/1-2hours	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 3 days - 1-2hrs

²⁶ Primarily a potato growing village cheese making is for home consumption.

Activities According Seasons	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
House Keeping (cleaning, washing, food preparation food processing etc)	4 hrs per day (2 in the morning and 2 in the evening)	4 hrs per day (2 in the morning and 2 in the evening)	4 hrs per day (2 in the morning and 2 in the evening)	4 hrs per day (2 in the morning and 2 in the evening)
Milking cows in the morning and in the evening (mucking out only if men absent)	2 hrs per day (1hr in the morning and 1hr in the evening)	2 hrs per day (1hr in the morning and 1hr in the evening)	2 hrs per day (1hr in the morning and 1hr in the evening)	2 hrs per day (1hr in the morning and 1hr in the evening)
Cheese Making	1 hr per day	1 hr per day	1 hr per day	1 hr per day - if in winter time they are milking
Field work including land cultivation, sowing, harvesting	8 hrs per day as and when required			
Irrigation	4-5hrs per day/as and when required/may be even at night			
Harvesting		8 hrs per day as an when required/sometimes working in groups, neighbours helping each other		
Preserving vegetables and fruits	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	2-3hrs per day	
Chickens(feeding, mucking out, egg collection)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)	20 min per day (10 in the morning and 10 in the evening)
Bread Baking/1-2hours	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 2 days - 1-2hrs	Every 3 days - 1-2hrs