# FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM
# EUROPE, CAUCASUS, AND CENTRAL ASIA (ECCA)

## GENDER AND YOUTH ANALYSIS

March 29, 2024

# FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM ECCA
## GENDER AND YOUTH ANALYSIS REPORT

March 29, 2024
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# CONTENTS

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ADHD | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| ECCA | Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia |
| GED | Graduate Equivalency Degree or General Educational Diploma |
| GESI | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion |
| GYSI | Gender, Youth and Social Inclusion |
| F2F | Farmer-to-Farmer |
| F2F-ECCA | Farmer-to-Farmer ECCA Program |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| LGBTQI+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex and more |
| MS | Microsoft |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| SOW | Scope of Work |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

The purpose of the Gender and Youth Analysis is to inform the development of the Farmer-to-Farmer Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (F2F-ECCA) Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion (GYSI) Strategy, which will guide F2F-ECCA's work within each country project. The Gender and Youth Analysis sought to identify and understand current gaps, best practices, and key areas of learning that will promote more equitable numbers of women and youth as volunteers and participants. Data collection methods included a rapid desk review and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection activities (surveys and key informant interviews) with current and prospective volunteers as well as hosts across all three F2F-ECCA countries (Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan). Summarized below are key findings and recommendations. More detail can be found in the body of the report.

## *Key Findings*

1.  *Women are more likely to volunteer if they feel confident about the context of the assignment.*
    Safety and security were a consistent topic for women, appearing as both a facilitating factor that increased confidence when women had information about procedures and processes as well as a hindering factor when there were concerns about unfamiliarity with a location or its relative safety. Women shared that having more knowledge about a location increased willingness to volunteer. Women who had previously taken up volunteer assignments still cited these topics as important but at lower rates, which indicates an increased level of comfort potentially due to having familiarity with potential assignment locations, having overseas travel experience to similar site locations, or experience with the way the volunteer program handles location specific logistics and safety concerns.

2.  *Women are more likely to volunteer if they feel confident about the "fit" of the assignment.*
    Women reported important factors that influence their interest in an assignment. A top concern women raised was difficulty in aligning their skillset with F2F SOWs, which are often highly technical and are in male-dominated agricultural sectors. Women are less likely to apply for an assignment if they do not perceive a strong fit with the description of the assignment. Further, the length of assignment was important to women, who reported that long assignments can be a barrier to volunteering. In contrast, women prioritized volunteer opportunities that had a clear social good component, indicating that assignments that help other women and youth, clearly support social good and impact, and allow them to build and continue relationships increase their interest in volunteer opportunities.

3.  *Women's ability to accept volunteer assignments may be impacted by structural factors such as caregiving responsibilities.*
    Spousal and family support emerged as a facilitating factor among married and partnered women respondents, which likely has to do with both the dynamics of these relationships as well as their willingness to support childcare coverage if needed. Although childcare support was not largely selected as a factor that would increase women's willingness to accept volunteer assignments, it is important to assess this against the respondent demographics: few respondents reported having children under the age of 18, so they would not substantially benefit from childcare support. This issue did show up repeatedly among the interviews as a likely contributor to women's lack of interest in volunteering until their children were older. This topic requires further exploration among women with younger children, particularly those who have not accepted volunteer assignments.

4.  *Youth are more likely to volunteer if they feel a connection to social and cultural aspects of the assignment.*
    Although youth were a small proportion of individuals represented in this study, we were able to glean some insights into youth interests. Youth shared that they valued opportunities to promote social good as part of volunteer assignments, with clear and consistently high ratings for building relationships, helping women and youth, promoting social impact, and learning about a new culture. They shared that increasing information about these topics would enhance interest in volunteer opportunities.

5.  *Volunteers of all genders, but particularly women and youth, are interested in bringing a stronger inclusion lens to their assignments, with support.*
    Overall, volunteers indicated a majority agreement with the concept of incorporating gender and youth considerations as part of their assignment activities. Unsurprisingly, agreement with this concept was much higher among women and youth than among men, although active disagreement with the idea was fairly low. Volunteers expressed greater interest and awareness of gender and youth considerations than confidence in how to address these concerns as part of their assignments, and they reported high levels of interest in receiving resources and support for increasing their integration of gender and youth in volunteer activities.

6.  *F2F hosts are aware of gender and youth inclusion issues and are interested in expanding their ability to promote women's and youth participation through further support.*
    Hosts indicated high levels of agreement with the importance of addressing gender and youth as part of volunteer assignments. However, this should be considered in light of the significant proportion of women host respondents who are independent farmers or represent women-led organizations, which is likely to skew the result in favor of this perspective. Hosts reported high levels of awareness and confidence in understanding and addressing gender and youth concerns in their respective contexts. Some hosts, particularly in interviews, noted the strong potential for playing a key role in shifting social norms and behavior change to promote more inclusive agricultural and economic decision-making and engagement in households, communities, and markets. Although hosts lack awareness of available ACDI/VOCA resources to support on these issues, they are interested in learning more and receiving additional support to build on their existing skills and expertise.

### *Recommendations*

1.  *Provide information about culture, safety and security, and travel logistics and support in an easily accessible location and format about F2F locations.*
    Because both women and youth highly value learning about a new culture as well as feeling confident in their safety and security when traveling to a volunteer assignment location, it is important to share information about F2F countries where assignments could take place. Sharing this information in advance, in an easily accessible location and format, will allow individuals who are considering assignments to learn about locations ahead of time, factoring this information into their decision-making process and influencing their interest in a potential opportunity.

2.  *Create and circulate materials to existing and prospective volunteer audiences that share F2F volunteer testimonies.*
    A common factor in reducing concerns to barriers was previous experience volunteering or previous exposure to international travel, particularly to the F2F countries. A frequently cited recommendation to increasing interest and willingness to take up volunteer assignments was to capture and share the experiences of previous volunteers, which would raise interest and build

confidence among those who may have concerns. By seeing and hearing from people like themselves – testimonials particularly from women and youth volunteers – more women and youth may be encouraged to take up volunteer assignments.

3. *Consider a peer-to-peer or mentor network to link existing volunteers to new or prospective volunteers.*
Some volunteers raised the point that inexperienced volunteers, particularly women or youth, may be more encouraged to volunteer when supported by an experienced volunteer through ongoing conversation or even paired volunteer assignments. Linking new volunteers with experienced volunteers not only assists with overcoming concerns about how to navigate new cultures, travel logistics, and safety concerns, but also can enable building confidence in performing the assignment activities or managing longer duration assignments.

4. *Format F2F scopes of work using language that is more accessible across contexts and to wider volunteer audiences.*
Finding a match between skills and F2F assignments was a significant barrier to volunteering for both women and youth. To some degree, the underrepresentation of women in the agriculture sector contributes to this challenge. However, a perceived lack of match between skill and SOW also causes women and youth to opt-out of assignments. One way to encourage more women and youth to volunteer for F2F assignments is to use language in scopes of work that is less industry specific and relies on less technical jargon and is written in a way that allows them to see a more likely match between their skills and the opportunity.

5. *Format F2F scopes of work using language that clearly articulates GYSI priorities and/or opportunities to engage with and support women and youth as part of an assignment.*
Given the high level of interest in supporting social good and helping other women and youth, explicitly stating this as a goal or component in F2F scopes of work is highly likely to attract the interest of women and youth volunteers. F2F scopes of work that are not specifically focused on activities targeted at women or youth, such as training for women or youth agri-entrepreneurs, should include explicit language related to the ways the assignment is benefitting households and communities as well as inclusion priorities for the assignment, such as promoting equitable participation of women and/or youth.

6. *Conduct additional consultation and research with women who have children under the age of 18.*
Although the survey did not provide significant data showing that childcare was a key factor influencing women's decision not to volunteer, the majority of respondents did not have young children. However, the issue of childcare and household responsibilities emerged strongly in the interviews, suggesting that this is a factor that needs to be further explored among women and individuals with children at home. The study should assess the degree to which this factor influences decisions to volunteer and what adjustments F2F could make to make it easier for parents to take up volunteer assignments.

7. *Provide GYSI capacity building and support to volunteers as part of assignment design.*
Study findings showed that volunteers have a strong interest in bringing greater gender and youth considerations as part of their volunteer assignments, which aligns with their interest in helping women and youth. While many shared that they are aware of challenges women and youth face, they are interested in learning more about these challenges and need assistance in applying this understanding to the specific work they are undertaking with their volunteer assignments. Providing capacity building and support will also help raise awareness and

increase understanding among the smaller group of volunteers who indicated that they do not think gender and youth inclusion is necessary or important.

8.  *Provide GYSI capacity building and resources to hosts.*
    While many hosts demonstrated a strong understanding and awareness of the challenges women and youth face in their contexts, they also showed strong interest in accessing further support for deepening their understanding and applying this knowledge to action. Hosts were also interested in a range of support options and resources, from consultations to written resources and tutorials.

9.  *Regularly collect feedback from volunteers and hosts that includes information about gender, youth, and social inclusion.*
    Current F2F indicators and reporting requirements do not capture information on volunteer perspectives about gender, youth, or other social factors that impact volunteer experience. While F2F does collect information on the gender balance of activity participants, it does not require collecting age or other social factors, nor do indicators or other reporting methods capture information on impacts on gender or social dynamics related to volunteer activities. Therefore, it would be helpful for F2F to regularly collect feedback from volunteers, particularly with attention to the challenges, opportunities, and needs of women and youth volunteers. Regular feedback from hosts, such as through mid-program surveys, pause & reflect sessions, or impact assessments, would also enable the project to learn whether efforts to promote increased women and youth participation and engagement are successful and having impacts on empowerment or opportunity for these groups.

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The Farmer-to-Farmer Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (F2F-ECCA) project funded by USAID seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, food security, and agricultural development worldwide by utilizing US volunteers to provide technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, agribusinesses, and other agriculture sector institutions in developing and transitional countries. F2F-ECCA will drive sustainable, broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector through increased agricultural sector productivity and profitability, and will strengthen agricultural sectors in Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.

The ECCA strategy will focus on Rural Enterprise Development with goals to:

- Increase agricultural sector productivity and profitability;
- Increase climate-smart agriculture, production, and processing practices;
- Increase access to diverse and profitable international markets;
- Strengthen agricultural extension and training;
- Promote gender equity and youth engagement;
- Generate employment;
- Expand sector access to financial services; and
- Strengthen international trade linkages and markets beyond Russia.

Gender equity and youth engagement are a priority for F2F-ECCA. The F2F-ECCA program design promotes inclusive markets by increasing women's access to economic resources and agency to act on economic decisions and increasing equitable access to finance. ACDI/VOCA intentionally takes action to create greater gender and youth inclusion to help increase their participation in agriculture-related enterprises in production, processing, marketing and agritourism.

As part of this approach, will F2F-ECCA has chosen country subsectors that have high female and youth participation in their workforces, such as agritourism. In Armenia and Georgia, most line workers in food processing businesses are women, thus ensuring that many of the of the beneficiaries of our food safety activities will be women. Supporting development in Kyrgyzstan's agritourism sector has the potential to create job opportunities and income for women, youth, and other vulnerable populations. It is therefore important to deepen the program's approach to build volunteer and host capacity for identifying and addressing the specific needs of these populations and to increase the diversity of our volunteers and hosts.

The previous phase of F2F-ECCA (FY18-23) fielded 213 assignments, 79 of which were completed by women (37%). A total of 17% of previous F2F-ECCA phase volunteers were under age 40 and 44% were under age 50. Just 5% of volunteers across all ECCA region countries were youth under age 30 and, of those, 77% were women. Of the 13 youth who completed assignments in the previous round of F2F, nine volunteered in Kyrgyzstan and four in Georgia. A breakdown of volunteers from the previous F2F phase by sex and country shows that 33% of volunteers in Armenia were women, 23% in Georgia, 59% in Kyrgyzstan, and 33% in Tajikistan. The figures for youth and women volunteers include paired assignments, which engaged local volunteers as well as Americans.

In the second phase of the program, F2F-ECCA plans to build on ACDI/VOCA's track record of recruiting and fielding a pool of volunteers that includes a greater proportion of women and youth. The program will also seek to engage more women and youth as hosts, local volunteers, and program participants.

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The objective of this study was to identify and understand current gaps, best practices, and key areas of learning that will promote more equitable numbers of women and youth as volunteers. The study investigated:

- barriers, opportunities, risks and enabling factors for women and youth volunteers, and
- volunteer and host awareness and willingness for integrating gender and youth considerations in their activities.

Findings from this study will inform the development of the F2F-ECCA GYSI Strategy, which will guide F2F-ECCA's work within each country project and be updated annually as part of the annual work planning process. The GYSI Strategy will be validated with critical stakeholders prior to finalization.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To more fully examine how F2F-ECCA may promote women and youth participation as volunteers and promote more equitable participation of women and youth in F2F activities, this study set out to examine:

1. What are the most significant factors (disabling and enabling) that impact women's and youth interest and willingness to participate as volunteers in F2F activities? Do these factors have significant differences depending on geographic or cultural context (i.e., Armenia, Georgia, or Kyrgyzstan)?

2. To what extent do volunteers and hosts have awareness or capacity for integrating gender and youth considerations into volunteer activities?

## RESEARCH METHODS

This GYSI Analysis consisted of a rapid document review and primary data collection using quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate gender and youth issues linked to F2F-ECCA implementation. The methodology was created by the authors of this report and validated by F2F-ECCA's project director and country directors.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was highly influenced by the objectives of F2F-ECCA, focusing on key research questions that will inform project goals and targets related to increasing the number of women and youth volunteers. Further, because the Farmer-to-Farmer program is designed to provide technical assistance through the expertise of US volunteers who work with in-country host farmers and agricultural organizations, understanding volunteer and host capacity for identifying and incorporating attention to gender and social inclusion dynamics for activity participants was included as an area of inquiry. This analysis was also meant to be rapid, with limited budget to support more extensive data collection and analysis.

## METHODOLOGY

The GYSI Analysis consisted of a rapid document review and primary data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The methodology was created by the authors of this report and validated by the project director.

### RAPID DESK REVIEW

The research team conducted a rapid desk review that included reviewing the project program description and relevant documents, USAID's gender analyses of the three F2F-ECCA countries, and other relevant research[1] to understand the context, identify gaps in GYSI information, and shape quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.

### SURVEY

The team distributed two online surveys, one targeted at US-based existing and prospective volunteers and one targeted at hosts located in the three F2F-ECCA countries. While the volunteer survey was distributed in English, the host surveys were translated into and distributed in the primary local languages of the respective countries: Armenian, Georgian, and Russian (spoken in Kyrgyzstan).

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured KIIs were conducted with 15 existing volunteers, prospective volunteers, and hosts located in the three F2F-ECCA countries. The research team conducted KIIs in English with existing and prospective volunteers via MS Teams. KIIs were conducted in the three F2F-ECCA countries by country directors in English or the respective local language, either in-person or via MS Teams.

## SAMPLING

The research team sought to engage a diverse sample of US volunteers and individuals who are considered potential volunteers as well as hosts located in the F2F-ECCA countries, utilizing a purposeful sampling approach. Because the study was investigating enabling and disabling factors for volunteerism for women and youth, the research team sought to achieve a high proportion of both women and youth among the volunteer sample.

### SURVEY SAMPLING

The research team generated a list of 122 (33 females / 88 males / 1 non-binary) existing volunteers, defined as individuals who have completed one or more F2F assignments with ACDI/VOCA within the past five years, and a list of 154 (140 females / 13 males/ 1 prefers not to disclose) prospective volunteers, defined as individuals in the ACDI/VOCA volunteers database who have expressed interest in participating in volunteer assignments. Due to legal regulations, F2F is unable to collect age data for the volunteer database, so the research team could not specify age in the targeted sample. Out of a total of 277 survey invitations, 91 responses were submitted for a 33% response rate, which is considered an average response rate for online research surveys.[2] Respondents were gender balanced but had a higher distribution in the adult age categories, with 85 (93%) over the age of 35 (see Table 1, below).

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[1] See full reference list in Annex 1.

[2] Eng-Jia Wu, Kelly Zhao, Francisca Fils-Aime. Response rates of online surveys in published research: A meta-analysis, Computers in Human Behavior Reports, Volume 7, 2022, 100206, ISSN 2451-9588, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100206.

**Table 1. Gender and Age Distribution of Volunteer Survey Respondents**

| Gender (n = 91) | # responses | % responses |
|---|---|---|
| Woman, female, or feminine | 47 | 52% |
| Man, male, or masculine | 41 | 45% |
| Prefer not to answer | 2 | <1% |
| Other | 1 | <1% |
| Age (n = 91) | # responses | % responses |
| 18-29 | 3 | <1% |
| 30-35 | 1 | <1% |
| **36-55** | **22** | **24%** |
| **Above 55** | **63** | **69%** |
| Prefer not to answer | 2 | <1% |

The research team generated a list of 173 current hosts across the three F2F-ECCA countries of Armenia (49), Georgia (50), and Kyrgyzstan (74). Out of a total of 173 survey invitations, 55 responses were received from F2F-ECCA hosts or representatives of host organizations (Armenia 13, Georgia 19, Kyrgyzstan 23). The total of 55 represents a 32% response rate, which is considered an average response rate for online research surveys.[3]

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SAMPLING

To recruit participants for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), the research team worked through the ACDI/VOCA Director, Global Volunteer Programs and F2F-ECCA country directors to identify previous volunteers, potential volunteers, and hosts in each country for interviews. The research team sought to interview both males and females and encouraged identification of youth where possible, but the lack of age data in the F2F database prevented pre-identification of youth for interviews. See Table 2 for distribution of KIIs by gender and type. No hosts who were interviewed identified as youth.

**Table 2. Distribution of KII Respondents**

| | Existing Volunteer | Potential Volunteer | Host Armenia | Host Georgia | Host Kyrgyzstan | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | **11** |
| Male | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | **4** |
| | | | | | | **15** |

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a standard practice, the research team incorporated an informed consent section into all data collection tools to explain the nature of the research, gain consent to record, and inform participants that participation is confidential and voluntary. Survey participants reviewed a consent statement and confirmed their agreement before proceeding with the survey. KII participants gave their informed consent verbally to participate in the interview and be recorded.

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[3] Ibid.

## LIMITATIONS

The first limitation of the study was the limited time available to conduct the data collection and analysis, which may have led to missed or unexplored findings. Second, identifying women and youth participants for the surveys and interviews was challenging due to database limitations. While the F2F database does collect gender of volunteers, due to legal regulations, F2F is unable to collect age data for the volunteer database unless voluntarily provided. For prospective volunteers who submit their information to be included in the database, submitting gender and age is voluntary. Therefore, gender and age were estimated by the research team by other factors in the profile. While the survey did achieve a high rate of female response, despite trying to identify youth participants for surveys and interviews, response rates by youth were low. Third, the need to translate the host surveys and KII tools from English to three different languages (Armenian, Georgian, and Russian), and the responses back to English, may have caused the loss of some nuance and meaning of responses. Although country directors, who are native speakers of the respective languages and speak English fluently, supported all tool translations and conducted the host KIIs, there is the possibility that some words or phrases have been left out or misinterpreted.

## FINDINGS

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### VOLUNTEER RESPONDENTS

#### *Gender, Age, Race, and Disability*
As noted above, volunteer respondents to the survey were largely gender balanced (53% female / 45% male), with a very small proportion of respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender (2%). No respondents selected options to identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

> **Protesting LGBTQI+ Inclusion**
>
> The survey was deliberately designed to allow respondents to select from a range of gender identities or to select other and explain the gender identity they felt most aligned with themselves. One individual selected "other" and entered a protest statement by providing her identity as female and stating her belief in the existence of "only two genders."

The majority of respondents were adults over the age of 30 (95%), with the largest proportion over the age of 55 (69%). Respondents were considered youth if they were between the ages of 18-29, and they made up a small minority of respondents at only 3.3%.

Volunteer respondents came from a diverse range of backgrounds, but the largest proportion of respondents identify as white (73%). Nine percent of respondents identified as Asian, while 5% of respondents identified as Black or African American, 2% identified as Middle Eastern or North African, and 1% identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

**Figure 1. Age of Volunteer Survey Respondents**



Legend:
- Prefer not to ans…
- Above 55
- 46 – 55
- 36 – 45
- 30 – 35
- 25 – 29
- 20 – 24
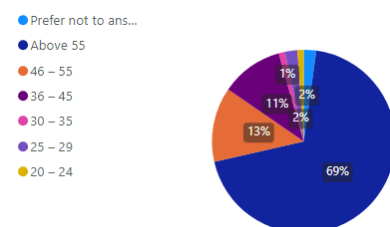
Most respondents indicated that they do not have a disability (89%), while 9% of respondents disclosed that they have some form of disability. Respondents were offered the opportunity to share disability type, and while not all chose to disclose, they reported experiencing a range of disabilities

including learning disability (ADHD, dyslexia, etc.), mental health disorder, mobility impairment, sensory impairment (vision or hearing), speech disorder, seizure disorder.

*"Three years ago, I was diagnosed with seizure disorder. It is now under control, and I have not had any issues in over 2 years and I did an F2F." – Male Survey Respondent*

### Marital Status and Children
The majority of respondents indicated that they are married or in a domestic partnership (65%), while 31% identify as un-partnered: 15% identify as single (never married), 11% as divorced, 4% as widowed, or 1% as separated.

A greater proportion of men reported being married or in a domestic partnership than women (85% males / 50% females). Meanwhile, women made up a large proportion of single, never married (27% females / 2% males) and divorced categories (15% females / 7% males).

The majority of respondents with children indicated that those children are largely over the age of 18 and living outside the home (46%). Of those with children of pre-school, elementary, or adolescent age, on average respondents reported: the children do not live with the respondent (2%), the children live part time with the respondent (2-3%), the children live with the respondent (5-7%) (see Table 3 below).

**Table 3. Distribution of Children Among Volunteer Survey Respondents**

| Children | I do not have children of this age | Prefer not to answer | They do not live with me | They live with me full time | They live with me part time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preschool (birth to age 5) | **85%** | 4% | 2% | 5% | 3% |
| Elementary (age 6 to 13) | **86%** | 4% | 2% | 5% | 2% |
| Adolescent (age 14 to 18) | **84%** | 4% | 2% | 7% | 3% |
| Adult children (age 19+) | **42%** | 4% | **46%** | 2% | 5% |

### Education
The respondents indicated high levels of educational attainment, with 95% having obtained some form of college degree. Forty percent reported obtaining a doctorate, 40% a master's degree, 14% a bachelor's degree, and 1% an associate degree.

The educational distribution is somewhat balanced across gender categories, although men tended to dominate the higher educational categories, reporting greater proportions of doctoral degrees (51% of males / 21% of females), master's degrees (37% of males / 29% of females), and bachelor's degrees (10% of males / 19% of females). Women were the only group to report holding associate degrees.
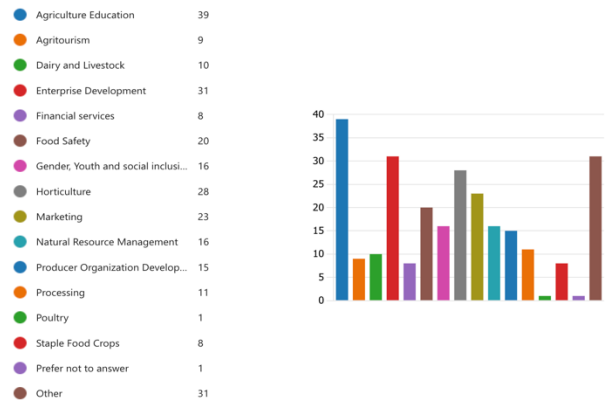
### Employment Status and Sector
Employment among respondents was distributed primarily across three main categories: full-time employment (35%), retired (34%), and self-employment (22%). The remaining respondents reported a range of statuses from part-time employment, student status, and Peace Corps.

Men were more likely to report being retired (54% of males / 19% of females), while women were more likely to report being full-time employed (48% of females / 20% of males). Men and women were equally likely to report being self-employed (23% of females / 22% of males).

Respondents reported working or studying across a range of agriculture sectors, with the highest number in agriculture education (39 respondents), enterprise development (31 respondents), horticulture (28 respondents), and marketing (23 respondents). See Figure 2 for additional details.

**Figure 2. Volunteer Work and Education Sectors**

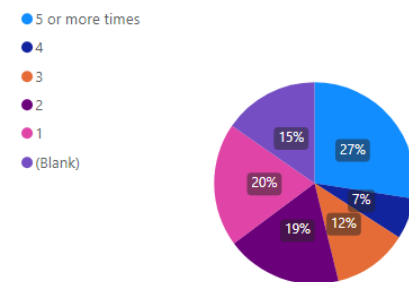| | |
|---|---|
| Agriculture Education | 39 |
| Agritourism | 9 |
| Dairy and Livestock | 10 |
| Enterprise Development | 31 |
| Financial services | 8 |
| Food Safety | 20 |
| Gender, Youth and social inclusi... | 16 |
| Horticulture | 28 |
| Marketing | 23 |
| Natural Resource Management | 16 |
| Producer Organization Develop... | 15 |
| Processing | 11 |
| Poultry | 1 |
| Staple Food Crops | 8 |
| Prefer not to answer | 1 |
| Other | 31 |



## *Participation in Farmer to Farmer Volunteer Opportunities*

Eighty-seven percent of respondents have participated in F2F volunteer opportunities, while 13% have not. When we look at this through a gender lens, we see that 75% of female respondents and 100% of male respondents have participated in F2F volunteer opportunities.

Respondents to the survey had significant experience volunteering with F2F. Sixty-five percent of respondents had volunteered with F2F multiple times: 27% percent reported that they had volunteered 5 or more times (21% females / 34% males). Of that, only 19% (23% females / 17% males) had volunteered just once.

Respondents reported ample experience across all ECCA countries, with significant volunteer assignments in Armenia (19), Georgia (31), Kyrgyzstan (29), and Tajikistan (23). They reported additional volunteer experience in a range of countries including but not limited to Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Madagascar, Moldova, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.

**Figure 3. Number of F2F Assignments**

- 5 or more times
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- (Blank)



## HOST RESPONDENTS

### *Organization Type and Size*

Host respondents primarily came from four main categories: individual, private farmers (33%); non-profit, public-interest NGOs (20%); private enterprises (20%); and cooperatives or associations (13%). There were a small number of responses from public/private education institutions (5%) and public sector/government agencies (5%).

The majority of hosts indicated that their organizations are small to medium size, with 45% of hosts reporting their organization has between 0-5 employees, and 40% of hosts reporting that their organization has between 6-25 employees. Twenty-two percent of hosts reported having between 25-100 employees, with no hosts reporting staffing levels above 100.

Fifty-six percent of hosts indicated that their organization was women-led/owned, while 9% indicated that their organization was youth-led/owned.

## Host Sector

Hosts reported operating in a wide range of sectors including agritourism (13%), gardening (13%), agricultural education (10%), major food crops (7%), gender (7%), youth and social inclusion (7%), entrepreneurship development (5%), recycling (5%), dairy and livestock (5%), financial services (3%), agrarian development (2%), beekeeping (2%), ecotourism (2%).

Hosts reported operating more in rural (55%) than urban (13%) areas, although a significant proportion (33%) indicate they operate in both rural and urban spaces.

## Gender, Age, and Role

The majority of host respondents were women (65% female / 33% male). This held true across all three host countries, with slightly closer gender balance in Armenia (54% female / 46% male) and greater gender gaps in Georgia (63% female / 32% male) and Kyrgyzstan (74% female / 26% male).

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**Protesting LGBTQI+ Inclusion**

The research team chose not to offer specific transgender or gender non-conforming options as part of the gender identity question in the host survey due to cultural sensitivies and anti-LGBTQI+ sentiments in the three countries where the survey was distributed. However, to still provide options for capturing gender diversity, the question was phrased, "what gender do you currently identify with" and survey respondents were able to select man, woman, or other. One host respondent in Georgia sent feedback directly to the country director protesting the phrasing of this specific question saying that they found the question "irritating" to the point that they almost stopped completing the survey and felt that the phrasing was an "attack."

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The majority of respondents to the host survey were adults over the age of 35 (67%). However, the largest proportion of respondents were in the age group 46-55 (31%), age group 36-45 (29%), and age group 26-35 (25%). Armenia's largest proportion of respondents were in the 36-54 age group (46%), Georgia's were in the 26-35 age group (42%), and Kyrgyzstan were more distributed across the 46-55 (39%) and 36-45 (30%) age groups. See Figure 4 below for comparison.

**Figure 4. Age Distribution of Host Respondents**
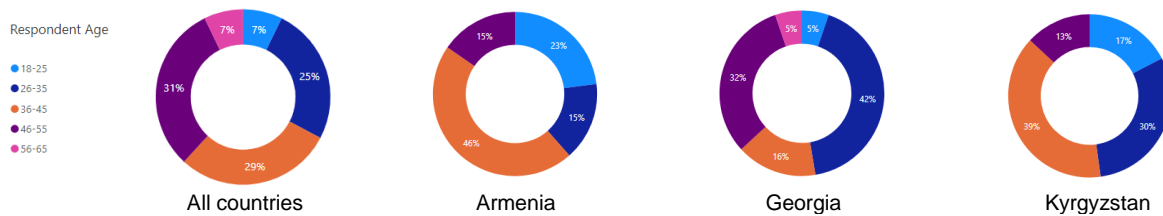


## Participation as Hosts

Hosts who responded to the survey ranged in experience hosting volunteers. Nearly half of the respondents (46%) had hosted a volunteer multiple times, while 48% had hosted a volunteer once. Although they had responded "yes" to the question of whether they had hosted an F2F volunteer before, 8% of respondents skipped the question about the number of times they had hosted entirely.

When comparing across countries, Kyrgyzstan has the greatest proportion of hosts who have hosted a volunteer once (53%) as compared to Armenia and Georgia, while the proportion of hosts who have hosted volunteers twice is relatively comparable across all three countries. Armenia and

Georgia have similar proportions of hosts who have hosted volunteers 5 or more times (Armenia 22% and Georgia 17%). See Figure 5 below for comparison.

**Figure 5. Frequency of Hosting Volunteers**



Legend:
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 5 or more times
- Skipped

All countries | Armenia | Georgia | Kyrgyzstan
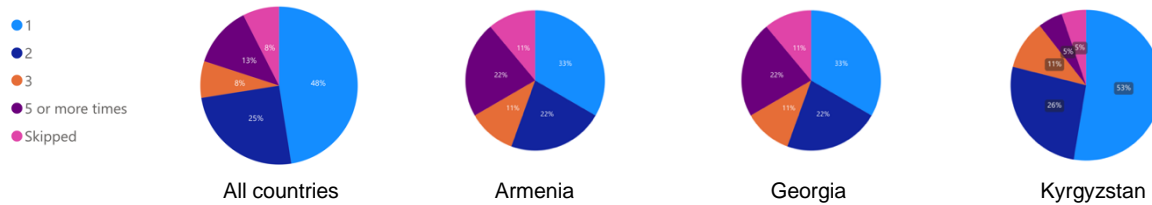
## FACTORS THAT IMPACT VOLUNTEER INTEREST

### BARRIERS IMPACTING WOMEN'S WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER

The most significant barriers impacting women's willingness to volunteer were concerns about match between skills and assignment (75% rated highly to somewhat important), safety and security (48.4% rated lack of information about security measures highly to somewhat important and safety/security concerns about destination 49.5% highly to somewhat important), and over-long duration of assignment (62.5% rated highly to somewhat important).

The majority of both male and female respondents expressed minimal concerns regarding travel logistics, including long travel durations, traveling to rural areas, financial considerations, accessibility to disability accommodations, dependent or childcare coverage (given that most respondents did not have young children), gender balance among host country staff, and potential lack of support from partners, family, or employers.

Please see Annex 1 for a table summarizing responses to factors that influence volunteers to decline an opportunity.

*Concerns about Match Between Skills and Assignment*

A significant proportion of women respondents, totaling 75%, in comparison to 66% of men, identified uncertainty regarding their skill alignment with the F2F assignment SOWs as a prominent factor influencing their acceptance of such assignments. During interviews, women participants corroborated this finding by highlighting their self-selection out of F2F programs due to perceived mismatches between the skills requested in SOWs and their own capabilities. Both women and men KII respondents discussed the technical complexity of F2F SOWs, often requiring expertise in traditionally male-dominated fields like agriculture and noted that the imbalance of women employed in agricultural technical roles is likely to contribute to fewer women self-identifying with the requisite experience outlined in F2F SOWs, so the program tends to attract more male than female volunteers for the advertised roles.

*"I don't know anything about apples from Kyrgyzstan, but I'll figure it out because I have certain skills, and you should realize that you've been vetted twice by NGO and by the host. So [as a woman you should] have greater confidence in your skills." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"Maybe the specific projects, as they look at them, might not feel they [the applicants] have the right skillset to apply to projects." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"I think that for applied sciences it takes long time for women to break the glass ceiling, and whether it being a hobby or business, in beekeeping sector, women have not been that involved in the past as they are now." – Male Volunteer KII*

### Safety and Security

Concerns surrounding the safety and security of travel destinations, along with a lack of information regarding security measures, emerged as the second most notable barrier, cited by approximately half of all respondents, irrespective of gender. Notably, this concern appeared more pronounced among female respondents who had not previously volunteered, with 58% expressing concerns compared to 47% of existing female volunteers.

*"People want to know that country has no conflict. I always check [the] US State Department site. If it's level 4 I am not going. If level 3, I check advisories and assess the safety factor. I also find out from the field about safety." – Female Volunteer KII*

### Over-long Duration of Assignments

A majority of female respondents (63%) identified lengthy assignments as a barrier. Interviews with volunteers revealed that navigating family responsibilities, predominantly borne by women, and limited affordable childcare options, compounded by job inflexibility, pose significant obstacles, particularly for women considering volunteering opportunities far from home.

*"Part of the reason why I've said no to a few invitations since then has largely been because I've been too committed to my work on location in the US and so I couldn't take that much time away." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"It might also be family responsibilities. It may be more difficult for women when they are childrearing ages to apply. Jobs get in the way. I was fortunate to be in academia where I had three months in the summer where I could be more flexible. Women could be in jobs where they are less flexible to do this volunteer work." – Female Volunteer KII*

### BARRIERS IMPACTING YOUTH WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER

While youth were a small proportion of respondents to the survey, youth participants reported that concerns about match between skills and assignment (66% highly or somewhat important), safety or security concerns about travel destinations (67%) lack of information about safety and security measures (33% highly or somewhat important), and lack of work/corporate support (67% somewhat important). No other barriers were raised as significant concerns to youth. Interestingly, these results largely aligned with the barriers raised by women.

### FACILITATING FACTORS IMPACTING WOMEN'S WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER

The most significant facilitating factors influencing women's decision to accept a volunteer assignment are opportunity to help other women, learning about a new culture, opportunities to support to social good and impact, building or continuing relationships, opportunity to help youth, professional development/skill building, safety and security measures provided, and traveling to a new geographic location.

Some differences in facilitating factors emerged when marital factors were analyzed: although family and partner/spouse support did not emerge as a top factor to volunteering for either gender, they did emerge as a significant influence for women who are married or in a domestic partnership. Similarly, for women who are employed, workplace support emerged as a supportive factor.

Please see Annex 1 for a table summarizing responses to factors that influence volunteers to accept an opportunity.

### Opportunity to Help Other Women and Youth

Ninety-eight percent of women rated the opportunity to help other women as highly to somewhat important as a factor in their motivation to volunteer. Similarly, 90% of women noted the opportunity to assist youth as highly to somewhat, underscoring a shared commitment to improving the lives of women and younger generations, particularly in communities where women and young people play crucial roles in agriculture and local economies. This motivation to support women and youth was echoed in volunteer KIIs and survey responses.

*"Improve the quality of life of small holder farmers, usually women and young people." – Female Volunteer Survey*

*"I want to work on development of girls, women, and youth. I liked every project I worked on. It allows me to volunteer as well as do my international consulting." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"Helping those who need help in emerging democracies. Supporting gender equity globally." – Male Volunteer Survey*

### Learn about a New Culture & Traveling to a New Geographic Location

Learning about new cultures resonated deeply among 96% of female volunteers who rated this factor highly to somewhat important. Additionally, 65% of women noted traveling to a new geographic location as highly to somewhat important. KIIs and survey results reinforced volunteers' appreciation for cultural exchange, contributing to personal growth but also fostering a deeper, mutual respect and understanding between volunteers and host communities.

*"For me, the biggest benefits are that I get to feel like I've contributed, that I meet new people, visit new places and have new experiences." – Female Volunteer Survey*

*"Inter-cultural exchange - I get to learn about a new country/culture, and I have a chance to share my perspective as an American." – Female Volunteer Survey*

*"I learn from participants in the host country, local partners, and the NGO reps I work with. I love learning about a new culture, their cuisine, and customs, all by sharing my knowledge I have acquired over a lifetime." – Female Volunteer Survey*

### Opportunities to Support Social Good and Impact

A significant 94% of female volunteer respondents considered the ability to support social good and impact as a crucial factor in their willingness to volunteer. This sentiment, reinforced by KIIs and survey data, highlights volunteer motivation to contribute meaningfully to society. Volunteer respondents expressed a strong sense of fulfillment derived from their work with host organizations and activity participants, especially when they witnessed the tangible benefits of their contributions.

*"It's a way to give back. I enjoy traveling, I enjoy working with people…it takes lot of effort and I really enjoy the opportunity." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"My reward is their [host organization's] enthusiasm when they realize what they want to do to make improvements. I ask questions and display their answers." – Female Volunteer Survey*

*"Assisting others by utilizing both education and experience to try to make a difference. For me, learning about cultures and how raising food, both here in the US, and in developing countries is difficult, and mostly, not appreciated by consumers. Trying to make a positive difference!" – Female Volunteer Survey*

### Building and Continuing Relationships

The value of building and sustaining relationships was highlighted by 94% of female volunteers as highly to somewhat important, supported by insights from KIIs and surveys. This reflects a deeply relational aspect of volunteering, where connections formed on the ground extend beyond temporary engagements to foster lifelong friendships and global networks. Volunteers mentioned that such relationships enrich their lives, offering both personal satisfaction and a broader understanding of global communities.

*"I now have friends and family all over the world. It has enriched my life tremendously. Once I make contact with people, we are friends forever… There's a tremendous amount of satisfaction. We don't just volunteer for others, but we also volunteer for ourselves. It enriches our lives, we learn a lot about other places. Americans don't know a lot about the rest of the world. It's tremendously rewarding to make differences in other people's lives." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"An opportunity to help others. To immerse a bit in other cultures, meet incredible people and develop a much more open and compassionate view of our human family - across borders, cultures and language." – Female Volunteer Survey*

### Professional Development/Skill Building

Professional development and skill-building is highlighted by 83% of female volunteers as highly to somewhat important, as echoed in KIIs and surveys. Personal growth alongside the professional contributions are referred to as key motivation for volunteering, especially in competitive fields like international development.

*"I have enjoyed every assignment and feel I am contributing and also having overseas experience working in the subject matter I am trained in. It has been very competitive to get paid assignments in this field [international development] but I also seek those opportunities as well. I want to share my expertise and travel internationally and F2F gives me that opportunity." – Female Volunteer Survey*

### Safety and Security

Given that safety and security concerns were cited as key barriers, it is consistent that a majority of respondents, both female (75%) and male (71%), identified the provision of safety and security measures as a facilitating factor impacting their willingness to volunteer. This factor held particular significance for women who had not previously volunteered in F2F programs, with 92% noting safety and security high to somewhat important compared to 69% of women respondents who have participated in F2F before.

### Support/ Encouragement of Partner/Spouse and Family

Although family and partner/spouse support did not emerge as a top factor to volunteering for either gender, it did emerge as a significant factor for women who are married or in a domestic partnership. Sixty-three percent of female respondents who are married or in a domestic partnership noted support/encouragement of partner/spouse as highly or somewhat important compared to 19% of female respondents who are not married or in domestic partnership. For male respondents, 64% overall indicated support/encouragement of partner/spouse being highly or somewhat important, rising to 85% when married or in domestic partnership.

*"Before I had a newborn daughter, I used to do 5-6 [volunteer] programs per year. My wife is taking care of a lot of things at home. Even with this, it is still very difficult to travel with a newborn baby [at home]. I was not able to do any last year. I can imagine for mothers who have ten times more responsibilities or single mothers, that it is practically impossible to do international programs." – Male Volunteer KII*

While only 38% of total female respondents noted support/encouragement of family as highly or somewhat important factor, for women who are married or in domestic partnerships this number rises to 54%. In comparison, 61% of total male and 63% of male who are married or in domestic partnership noted family support/encouragement as highly or somewhat important.

## Work/Corporate Support for Volunteering

Sixty percent of female respondents with full-time or part-time employment noted work/corporate support for volunteering as highly or somewhat important, contrasting with those without such commitments (26%). In comparison, 42% of total male respondents and 63% of males who are full time or part time employed noted work/corporate support as highly or somewhat important. During interviews, respondents highlighted the role of practical considerations such as timing, career flexibility, and some participants linked their participation in F2F programs to achieving professional milestones or being at a suitable point in their careers.

*"These opportunities worked out well and allowed me to use some of the skills I had acquired through my education, and on a timely basis with my other commitments." – Female Volunteer KII*

## Factors that Increase Women's Willingness Accept a Volunteer Opportunty

Respondents were asked about factors that could increase willingness to accept an F2F volunteer assignment. The mostly cited responses by female respondents were more knowledge about assignment locations (23%), more knowledge about safety and security measures (21%), open discussion of gender equality/women's rights (13%), opportunities for remote volunteering (13%), and incentives from work/university (9%).

Among women who have not previously volunteered with F2F, 30% highlighted the need for more knowledge about safety and security measures, a notably higher percentage than the 17% of women with prior F2F volunteer experience. Additionally, a slightly larger proportion of women without F2F experience (27%), expressed a desire for more information about the assignment location, compared to 21% of women who have volunteered with F2F before.

**Table 4. Factors that Increase Women's Willingness to Volunteer**

| Factors | Previous F2F experience? | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| If I had more knowledge about the location of the assignment | 21% | **27%** |
| If I had more knowledge about safety and security measures | 17% | **30%** |
| If gender equality/women's rights are openly discussed | 14% | 12% |
| If I was able to provide support remotely | 11% | 15% |
| If my work/university offered incentives | 8% | 9% |

## Interest in Future F2F Volunteer Opportunities

Overall interest in future F2F volunteer opportunities is high, with 86% (43% female/ 41% male) of respondents reporting that they plan to volunteer in the future. The rates of interest in volunteering

are higher among female respondents who have previous experience (83%) than among those who those without an F2F volunteering history (75%). This suggests a significant inclination among former participants to return to volunteering.

### Interest in F2F-ECCA Countries

A majority of respondents reported a high degree of willingness to travel to all three current F2F ECCA countries: respondents indicated they are "very willing" to travel to Armenia (77%), Georgia (85%) and Kyrgyzstan (73%). These results did not change significantly by gender. They did, however, change by volunteer experience. Participants who had F2F volunteer experience expressed higher levels of willingness to travel to all three countries than participants with no F2F volunteer history:

**Table 5. Willingness to Travel to F2F-ECCA Countries by Volunteer Experience**

| Previous Experience? | Very Willing | | Somewhat Willing | | Neutral | | Somewhat Unwilling | | Completely Unwilling | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Armenia | **78%** | **67%** | 11% | 8% | 5% | 17% | 4% | 0% | 0% | 8% |
| Georgia | **86%** | **75%** | 10% | 0% | 3% | 25% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Kyrgyzstan | **75%** | **58%** | 11% | 17% | 11% | 8% | 3% | 8% | 0% | 8% |

Both in the survey and during interviews, participants emphasized positive past volunteering experiences in general as well as their familiarity and positive experiences in the F2F ECCA countries. They described valuing the cultural experience of volunteering and developing both working and personal relationships with hosts and participants organizations as well as their eagerness to volunteer in a new country and gain further experience in new locations with new cultures and people.

*"I have enjoyed working there before and loved the people I met, food I ate, work I did and left feeling I helped - even if just a little." – Female Volunteer Survey*

*"I have participated in numerous projects in Georgia and always enjoy returning to see the improvement made by my hosts." – Male Volunteer Survey*

*"Those three countries are going through a transformation period with a lot of domestic and external challenges. I think my skill set, world travel (so far 32 developing countries) and 32 years of entrepreneurial background will be helpful in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and making a lasting impact." – Male Volunteer Survey*

Conversely, the small percentage of participants who expressed some or complete unwillingness to participate in F2F ECCA countries cited safety concerns in the region as the primary reason for their reluctance.

### FACILITATING FACTORS IMPACTING YOUTH WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER

While youth were a small proportion of respondents to the survey, youth participants reported that the most significant factors influencing their decisions to accept a volunteer assignment, rated as highly important, were building or continuing relationships (100%), opportunity to help women (100%), opportunity to help youth (100%), opportunity to support social good and impact (100%), and learning about a new culture (80%).

These were followed by less significant factors, rated as highly and somewhat important, which include traveling to a new geographic location (89%), and safety and security measures provided (67%), professional development or skill building (67%).

These findings somewhat align with the facilitating factors for women; however, it should be noted that among youth there is an even stronger prioritization of building relationships, promoting social good for women and youth, and learning about a new culture. Youth value opportunities to build their professional qualifications but they are conscious of safety and their well-being, and they indicate that they prefer professional development opportunities that promote social benefits with a particular eye to promoting the inclusion of women and youth.

*Factors that Increase Youth Willingness Accept a Volunteer Opportunty*
When asked about factors that could increase willingness to accept an F2F volunteer assignment, youth respondents affirmed the above facilitating factors, indicating that the following would increase their interest in volunteer assignments: open discussion of gender equality/women's rights (30%), more knowledge about assignment locations (20%), and more knowledge about safety and security measures (20%). Youth also indicated an interest in work/university incentives to volunteer (20%) and opportunities for remote volunteering (10%).

**Table 6. Factors that Increase Youth Willingness to Volunteer**

| Factors | If I had more knowledge about the location of the assignment | If I had more knowledge about safety and security measures | If gender equality/women's rights are openly discussed | If I was able to provide support remotely | If my work/university offered incentives |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 20% | 20% | 30% | 10% | 20% |

## INTEGRATING GENDER AND YOUTH CONSIDERATIONS IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FOR INCORPORATING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

While overall 68% of respondents indicated that incorporating gender considerations while planning for an F2F assignment is highly to somewhat important, there is a gender divide: 80% of female respondents indicated this was highly or somewhat important compared to 56% of male respondents. The number of female respondents who report that this is highly to somewhat important increases slightly among women who have previously participated in F2F programs, rising to 84%, compared to female respondents without volunteering experience at 67%. This gap suggests that experienced volunteers may have witnessed gender gaps that increase their awareness of the importance of gender considerations.

**Table 7. Importance of Gender Considerations to Female Volunteers**

| Previous Experience? | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Highly important | **45%** | **34%** |
| Somewhat important | **39%** | **33%** |
| Neutral | 8% | 17% |
| Not very important | 0% | 8% |

| Not at all important | 8% | 8% |
|---|---|---|

## VOLUNTEER CAPACITY FOR INCORPORATING GENDER AND YOUTH CONSIDERATIONS

In general, respondents expressed awareness of challenges women and youth face in participating in trainings or technical activities as well as developing ways to increase their participation. Awareness of these issues was reported in greater proportion to confidence in how to address them. While 53% of respondents reported awareness of challenges women and youth face, respectively, only 29% of respondents reported feeling confident to use this understanding about women and 23% about youth in their assignment. The numbers are similar for developing ways to increase women's or youth participation in activities, with 49% and 45% reporting awareness, respectively, which drops to 29% feeling confident to use this for women's participation in volunteer assignments and 25% for youth participation.

In all areas, participants responded that they don't know about this at a rate of between 13-20%, rising to 20-22% across all areas among male respondents.

Confidence and awareness levels rise slightly among women respondents. Interestingly, awareness levels remain stable among female respondents who have previously volunteered in F2F programs, but confidence levels in developing ways to increase women's and youth participation do not. Among women 31% and 25% of women report feeling confident of using their understanding of women's and youth's challenges regardless of volunteer experience. However, while 33% and 29% of women report feeling confident of developing ways to increase women and youth participation, this shifts to 31% and 25% among women with volunteer experience. This may suggest that exposure to the specific challenges women and youth face in different cultural contexts does not necessarily provide enough capacity or understanding for how to address those challenges without additional support.

### *Awareness of Potential Actions*
When asked about different approaches respondents take to incorporate gender and youth considerations as part of their planning process for volunteer assignments, respondents indicated that they engage in a range of approaches. The most frequently reported approaches cited were consultations with the country team and host organization to understand gender and social norms, scheduling activities with consideration of women's and youth's availability, desk research to understand in-country's gender and social norms, and plan specific activities to reach/engage women. Preferred approaches are not significantly different across male and female volunteer respondents. See Table 8 for additional detail.

**Table 8. Approaches Respondents Take to include Gender or Youth Considerations as Part of F2F Assignment Planning**

| Approaches | Reported % |
|---|---|
| Consultations with the country team to understand gender and social norms | 14% |
| Schedule activities with consideration of women's availability/accessibility | 12% |
| Desk research to understand in-country gender and social norms | 12% |
| Consultations with the host organization to understand gender and social norms | 11% |
| Plan specific activities to reach/engage women | 11% |
| Consultations with the host organization to discuss gender and/or youth considerations | 10% |
| Schedule activities with consideration of youth availability/accessibility | 10% |
| Plan specific activities to reach/engage youth | 8% |
| Plan specific activities to address gender or social norms | 8% |

A minority of respondents take these actions, aligning with the lower levels of confidence expressed regarding developing ways to increase women's and youth's participation.

### Awareness of Resources

Significantly, few survey respondents were aware of existing ACDI/VOCA resources that are available to support volunteers to include gender or youth considerations in their assignment preparation and planning. Ninety-two percent of respondents indicated that they had no awareness of such resources.

Among participants who have volunteered for F2F before, only 14% of female respondents were aware of ACDI/VOCA resources available to help them include gender or youth considerations as part of their planning, compared to 5% of male respondents. None of the respondents who have not been part of F2F before were aware of any resources. Although respondents were unaware of most ACDI/VOCA gender and youth resources, respondents that indicated familiarity with available resources reported awareness of or confidence using the resources listed in Table 9.

**Table 9. Volunteer Awareness of ACDI/VOCA Gender and Youth Resources**

| Resource | Know About This | Feel Confident to Use |
|---|---|---|
| ACDI/VOCA GESI Policy | 13% | 7% |
| ACDI/VOCA Youth Strategy | 10% | 9% |
| ACDI/VOCA Volunteers Gender Inclusion Guide | **21%** | 9% |
| Volunteer Resource – The Business Case for Gender Equity | **21%** | 9% |

### Interest in Support

Respondents indicated a high degree of interest in receiving support to increase consideration of women's and youth's needs in assignment design and implementation. Seventy percent of all respondents (41% female / 29% male) expressed interest in receiving support to increase the engagement of women and/or youth as part of their volunteer assignments. However, among experienced women volunteers and those who had not yet volunteered, there was a significant difference in response: 75% of experienced female volunteers indicated yes, and 22% indicated "I don't know," which rises to 83% yes and drops to 8% "No" among female respondents who have not volunteered.

**Table 10. Female Respondents' Interest in Receiving Support**

| | Previous Experience? | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Interested | **75%** | **83%** |
| Not Interested | 0% | 8% |
| I don't know | **22%** | 0% |
| Other | 3% | 8% |

### Interest in Types of Support or Resources

Respondents who indicated interest in further support were asked to provide feedback on forms of support that would be most appealing. The majority of respondents indicated that they were highly or

somewhat interested in four primary types of support: a pre-departure consultation with a GYSI Advisor (98%), a written guide or resource (86%), a video tutorial (88%), and a self-paced online course (82%).

These proportions increased among respondents who had never volunteered before, rising to 100% across all four categories.

Interviews confirmed the interest in additional resources, with recommendations made by experienced and prospective volunteers to provide more opportunities to learn about gender and youth needs in the host country, prepare for cultural context and expectations, as well as access resources and support for applying this knowledge as part of volunteer assignments.

*"If you point us to some of the resources, tools, toolkits and come up with strategy during the pre-work - I see that you have tools online. Somebody to work us with to fine tune the SOW and streamline our efforts. I usually had somebody to work with and like that I was able to connect with people in the field (not in every case) … I would want to have better understanding ahead of time. Sometimes, it's like, you will find out when you get to the field." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"Little short videos (for example what to pack, what locals wear, what type of clothes is appropriate) help women and youth understood what's appropriate to wear. Volunteer needs to know earlier what to expect in terms of culture." – Female Volunteer KII*

## HOST SUPPORT FOR INCORPORATING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, 58% of hosts regarded incorporating gender considerations when planning for an F2F volunteer assignments highly to somewhat important, with varying emphasis by country: Armenia (46%), Georgia (58%), and Kyrgyzstan (66%). The proportion of hosts reporting gender considerations as highly to somewhat important rises among women-led organizations in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, reaching 70% and 80% respectively.

An even higher proportion of hosts (82%) acknowledged incorporating youth considerations while planning an F2F assignment as highly to somewhat important, with Armenia leading at 92%, followed by Kyrgyzstan (85%) and Georgia (73%). Support for incorporating gender considerations was higher among hosts with prior experience hosting F2F at 88%, as compared to 66% of hosts without such experience.

## HOST CAPACITY FOR INCORPORATING GENDER AND YOUTH CONSIDERATIONS

Nearly one-third of hosts reported being aware of the challenges faced by women (30%) and youth (29%). Forty-two percent of hosts expressed confidence in their understanding of the challenges faced by women to participate in activities, with slightly higher proportion (44%) claiming similar confidence for youth-related challenges.

When it comes to applying this understanding, hosts reported being aware of actions to increase participation of women (31%) and youth (36%), and higher portion of hosts (44%) reported confidence in their ability to implement actions that enhance participation for both groups.

Interestingly, a geographical divergence is observed: hosts from Georgia display a marginal increase in confidence across all categories, between 47-68%, whereas hosts from Kyrgyzstan show an increase in awareness across all categories, between 48-61%.

A visible minority of hosts responded that they don't know about challenges faced by women (16%) or youth (18%), nor do they know how to identify actions to increase the participation of women (20%) or youth (15%).

*"I think it's important to have at least a couple of online meetings with the host/partner before the physical visit to the assignment in order to be able to ask precise questions and conduct a simple needs assessment in the communities they are visiting. This will allow to both sides to make a clearer work plan and understand the real needs on the ground and be prepared before meeting in person. In my opinion in the initial phase of the assignment the online meetings are very important and helpful for both the hosts and the volunteer experts." –Female Host KII*

*"Before the volunteer arrives, we'll discuss their preferences and any specific needs. We'll communicate openly about planned activities, stay flexible to accommodate their feedback, and consider creating a preference list for them to express their needs and expectations." – Female Host KII*

*"I would develop a presentation, prepare information for the volunteer about our country, about our beneficiaries, with whom they will be working. And information about our company. Although Kyrgyzstan is small, it is divided into the south and the north, and the traditions differ slightly in the south from the north. Even such detailed information, such as attitudes towards women, how to work with women and with youth." – Female Host KII*

### Host Awareness of Challenges Faced by Women and Youth

Hosts were asked to share their perceptions of the biggest challenge faced by women and youth to participate in F2F activities. Challenges faced by women focused on the themes of social norms, in some cases influenced by religious beliefs or practices as well as time burdens and domestic responsibilities.

*"Closedness of groups, patriarchal and religious attitudes that limit women's participation, their activity (economic, social), no consideration of women's real needs." – Female Host Survey*

*"They (women) often have difficulty expressing their opinions and participating in discussions in the presence of men." – Female Host Survey*

*"I think an important consideration to take is the agricultural season, this is when the participants are more likely to be more passive in participating in any type of trainings. These are spring and fall time period when people are either engaged with planting or harvesting works and this is their main income. During summer and winter months farmers, both women and man (despite age and gender) are more likely to participate as it's comparatively low season and they can dedicate more time to learning events." – Female Host KII*

*"In many rural areas, men go for seasonal work outside the country and all the physical work in the house and in the garden/orchard is carried out by women, nevertheless men are the decision makers, even remotely and decide what, where and when to plant even if the actual work will be done by women. I think we need to change this and F2F assignments or similar projects have a big role in this change. Women get more knowledge and hence more confidence in making decisions and besides they see innovative approaches which otherwise won't see and are probably going to implement or mimic those innovations." – Female Host KII*

Hosts reported challenges faced by youth include lack of knowledge, motivation, or interest as well as migration. Hosts pointed out, however, that perceptions about lack of motivation or interest among young people may be attributed to inexperience or lack of specific outreach to youth.

*"Little awareness of the possibilities of such programs - dominance of adults - little interest due to lack of knowledge about potential opportunities." –Female Host Survey*

*"The biggest challenge for youth when participating in activities run by Farmer-to-Farmer Project volunteers may be a lack of experience and knowledge in agriculture or related fields. Many young people may face a lack of practical farm experience or knowledge of agricultural processes. This can lead to difficulties in learning new skills and completing assigned tasks on farms." – Female Host Survey*

### *Support for Actions to Promote Women's and Youth Participation*

Hosts were asked to rate the importance of various factors for ensuring women and/or youth inclusion in activities conducted by F2F volunteer. Overall, hosts reported all factors to be of considerable importance for inclusion. The most critical factors reported were ensuring disability accommodations; ensuring materials are accessible to non-literate participants; and providing safe, clean hygiene facilities available on site, with 89% of hosts rating these as high to somewhat important. Close behind were ensuring safe, reliable transportation to site, rated by 87% of hosts as high to somewhat important, and scheduling sessions with attention to childcare responsibilities, rated by 85% of hosts as high to somewhat important.

Hosts were somewhat divided on single-gender (female-only) sessions, with 54% rating this as highly to somewhat important and with 13% of hosts reporting this as not very to not at all important. 20% of hosts expressed neutrality regarding this factor.

Conversely, the factor perceived as least important was ensuring support of religious leaders, with 25% of hosts rating this as not very to not at all important.

**Table 11. Host Responses to Factors to Ensure Women /Youth Participation in an F2F Activity**

| | Highly important | Somewhat important | Neutral | Not very important | Not at all important | Skipped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ensure disability accommodations | 62% | 27% | 4% | 0% | 0% | 7% |
| Ensure materials are accessible to non-literate participants | 73% | 16% | 4% | 0% | 0% | 7% |
| Ensure materials include positive depictions of both males and females | 64% | 13% | 7% | 2% | 5% | 9% |
| Ensure support of male family members | 43% | 25% | 13% | 4% | 4% | 11% |
| Ensure support of religious leaders | 26% | 13% | 20% | 16% | 9% | 16% |
| Scheduling sessions with attention to school hours | 56% | 13% | 16% | 4% | 0% | 11% |
| Scheduling sessions with attention to childcare responsibilities | 61% | 24% | 4% | 2% | 0% | 9% |
| Safe, reliable childcare | 71% | 9% | 5% | 0% | 2% | 13% |
| Safe, clean hygiene facilities available on site | 76% | 13% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 7% |
| Safe, reliable transportation to site | 71% | 16% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 13% |
| Single-gender sessions available (female only) | 36% | 18% | 20% | 4% | 9% | 13% |

### *Host Awareness of Resources*

Eighty percent of host organizations indicated that they had no awareness of existing ACDI/VOCA resources that are available to support host organizations to include gender or youth considerations

as part of their assignment planning with notable geographic differences: Armenia (100%), Georgia (63%) and Kyrgyzstan (83%).

The familiarity with ACDI/VOCA's resources slightly increases among organizations that have previously engaged in F2F assignments, with 18% acknowledging awareness, compared to a lower awareness rate of 13% among hosts without prior F2F participation. This distinction suggests that experience with F2F programs may marginally increase awareness of available resources, though overall knowledge remains limited.

Although host organizations were unaware of most ACDI/VOCA gender and youth resources, organizations that indicated familiarity with available resources reported awareness of or confidence using the resources listed in Table 12.

**Table 12. Host Organization Awareness of ACDI/VOCA Gender and Youth Resources**

| Resource | Know About This | Feel Confident to Use |
|---|---|---|
| ACDI/VOCA GESI Policy | 18% | 16% |
| ACDI/VOCA Youth Strategy | 15% | 15% |
| ACDI/VOCA Volunteers Gender Inclusion Guide | 9% | 20% |
| Volunteer Resource – The Business Case for Gender Equity | 15% | 20% |

### *Host Interest in Support*

Seventy-one percent of host organizations expressed interest in receiving support to increase the engagement of women and/or youth as part of their assignment planning. However, a divergence emerges when comparing responses between organizations with previous F2F experience and those without. Specifically, 78% of organizations that participated in F2F indicated yes, contrasted with a lower rate of 53% among organizations without F2F experience.

Host organizations who indicated interest in further support were asked to provide feedback on forms of support that would be most appealing to them. Overall, over half of the hosts expressed interest in all five key support options presented. Specifically, 58% of hosts were highly to somewhat interested in GYSI specific consultations. Video tutorials appealed to 56% of the hosts, indicating a high to somewhat interest level. Similarly, consultations with a GYSI advisor and participation in self-paced online courses each attracted the interest of 54% of hosts, who rated these options as highly to somewhat interesting.

**Table 13. Host Organization Interest in Types of Support**

| Types of Support | Highly interested | Somewhat interested | Neutral | Not very interested | Not at all interested | I don't know | Skipped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consultation with a Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion advisor | 30% | 24% | 18% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 24% |
| Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion specific consultation with country team | 31% | 27% | 13% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 25% |
| Self-paced online course | 38% | 16% | 9% | 4% | 2% | 2% | 29% |
| Video tutorial | 36% | 20% | 13% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 25% |
| Written guide or resource | 33% | 26% | 5% | 5% | 0% | 2% | 29% |

*"Providing training materials and resources on gender equality and youth inclusion in agriculture. This may include webinars, trainings, printed materials, and online resources. Organizing youth and women's programs, including internships, summer camps and clubs that will focus on agriculture,*

*gender equality and sustainable development. Using social networks, blogs, websites, and other media platforms to disseminate information about gender issues and women's achievements, youth in agriculture. Technical support for organizations that work with women in villages." – Female Host Survey Response*

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite successes in recent years by ACDI/VOCA to increase women's participation as F2F volunteers as well as women's interest in taking up these opportunities, women still face challenges capitalizing on volunteer opportunities. Many of these challenges are based in social norms and systemic inequalities, but there are opportunities for improving F2F processes and procedures to promote change.

Further, while there is a strong desire to increase youth participation in F2F volunteer opportunities, there are structural and social challenges that significantly inhibit youth ability to engage. It is possible to increase youth participation with targeted attention to the ways current F2F practices are less likely to accommodate youth.

Below are conclusions that are supported by the findings discussed in the above section:

1.  *Women are more likely to volunteer if they feel confident about the context of the assignment.* Safety and security were a consistent topic for women, appearing as both a facilitating factor that increased confidence when women had information about procedures and processes as well as a hindering factor when there were concerns about unfamiliarity with a location or its relative safety. Women shared that having more knowledge about a location increased willingness to volunteer. Women who had previously taken up volunteer assignments still cited these topics as important but at lower rates, which indicates an increased level of comfort potentially due familiarity with assignment locations, having overseas travel experience to similar site locations, or experience with the way the volunteer program handles location specific logistics and safety concerns.

2.  *Women are more likely to volunteer if they feel confident about the "fit" of the assignment.* Women reported important factors that influence their interest in an assignment. A top concern women raised was difficulty in aligning their skillset with F2F SOWs, which are often highly technical and are in male-dominated agricultural sectors. Women are less likely to apply for an assignment if they do not perceive a strong fit with the description of the assignment. Further, the length of assignment was important to women, who reported that long assignments can be a barrier to volunteering. In contrast, women prioritized volunteer opportunities that had a clear social good component, indicating that assignments that help other women and youth, clearly support social good and impact, and allow them to build and continue relationships increase their interest in volunteer opportunities.

3.  *Women's ability to accept volunteer assignments may be impacted by structural factors such as caregiving responsibilities.* Spousal and family support emerged as a facilitating factor among married and partnered women respondents, which likely has to do with both the dynamics of these relationships as well as their willingness to support childcare coverage if needed. Although childcare support was not largely selected as a factor that would increase women's willingness to accept volunteer assignments, it is important to assess this against the respondent demographics: few respondents reported having children under the age of 18, so they would not substantially benefit from childcare support. This issue did show up repeatedly among the interviews as a likely

contributor to women's lack of interest in volunteering until their children were older. This topic requires further exploration among women with younger children, particularly those who have not accepted volunteer assignments.

4. *Youth are more likely to volunteer if they feel a connection to social and cultural aspects of the assignment.*
   Although youth were a small proportion of individuals represented in this study, we were able to glean some insights into youth interests. Youth shared that they valued opportunities to promote social good as part of volunteer assignments, with clear and consistently high ratings for building relationships, helping women and youth, promoting social impact, and learning about a new culture. They shared that increasing information about these topics would enhance interest in volunteer opportunities.

5. *Volunteers of all genders, but particularly women and youth, are interested in bringing a stronger inclusion lens to their assignments, with support.*
   Overall, volunteers indicated a majority agreement with the concept of incorporating gender and youth considerations as part of their assignment activities. Unsurprisingly, agreement with this concept was much higher among women and youth than among men, although active disagreement with the idea was fairly low. Volunteers expressed greater interest and awareness of gender and youth considerations than confidence in how to address these concerns as part of their assignments, and they reported high levels of interest in receiving resources and support for increasing their integration of gender and youth in volunteer activities.

6. *F2F hosts are aware of gender and youth inclusion issues and are interested in expanding their ability to promote women's and youth participation through further support.*
   Hosts indicated high levels of agreement with the importance of addressing gender and youth as part of volunteer assignments. However, this should be considered in light of the significant proportion of women respondents who are independent farmers or represent women-led organizations, which is likely to skew the result in favor of this perspective. Hosts reported high levels of awareness and confidence in understanding and addressing gender and youth concerns in their respective contexts. Some hosts, particularly in interviews, noted the strong potential for playing a key role in shifting social norms and behavior change to promote more inclusive agricultural and economic decision-making and engagement in households, communities, and markets. Although hosts lack awareness of available ACDI/VOCA resources to support on these issues, they are interested in learning more and receiving additional support to build on their existing skills and expertise.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a set of actions the research team proposes be taken by F2F-ECCA based on the findings and conclusions. To the extent possible, recommendations were developed to be action-oriented and practical. These recommendations are meant to inform and be integrated into the F2F-ECCA GYSI Strategy. As part of the development of the GYSI Strategy, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from this analysis will be shared and validated with key stakeholders. The recommendations below are provided in no specific order.

1. *Provide information about culture, safety and security, and travel logistics and support in an easily accessible location and format about F2F locations.*
   Because both women and youth highly value learning about a new culture as well as feeling confident in their safety and security when traveling to a volunteer location, it is important to

share information about F2F countries where assignments could take place. Sharing this information in advance, in an easily accessible location and format, will allow individuals who are considering assignments to learn about locations ahead of time, factoring this information into their decision-making process and influencing their interest in a potential opportunity.

Consider sharing information not just on websites but also on social media platforms where youth are more active and engaged, to broaden outreach. For individuals, particularly women and youth who may be concerned about traveling to unfamiliar places or have concerns about safety, this information will provide opportunities to reassure and build confidence in both the safety of the location and the measures put in place by F2F to protect and care for volunteers while on assignment.

*"When a person expresses interest and you send initial SOW, have a video with women and youth who say, yes, I took the assignment, and first I was scared, but I did it. It was safe. The interpreter helped. Give people correct images about safety, accommodation, travel time, travel accommodation for handicapped, etc." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"I think it's important to first of all highlight the importance of the input [volunteers] can have going for an assignment in other countries. This will help them understand the value they can bring and the impact they can have going for an assignment. Besides it's important to tell the volunteers all the advantages they can have besides being helpful to small businesses in developing countries, such as getting a chance to travel to new and unknown countries, learn about their culture and meet new people, what interesting experience they can have along the professional assignment. I think all this [can] help to motivate women and young professionals a bit more, because I'm sure everyone who goes for volunteering knows that there is need in what they do. But mentioning once more how much the small businesses and farms need their assistance in the developing countries will motivate even more." – Female Host KII*

2. *Create and circulate materials to existing and prospective volunteer audiences that share F2F volunteer testimonies.*

   A common factor in reducing concerns to barriers was previous experience volunteering or previous exposure to international travel, particularly to the F2F countries. A frequently cited recommendation to increasing interest and willingness to take up volunteer assignments was to capture and share the experiences of volunteers, which would raise interest and build confidence among those who may have concerns. By seeing and hearing from people like themselves – testimonials particularly from women and youth volunteers – more women and youth may be encouraged to take up volunteer assignments.

*"I would say better communication, by using videos, short conversations with volunteers. Maybe I'm the new volunteer that has returned from a place that is unknown, not recognized by most people. Do a short interview where you ask what the country is like, did you feel safe, did you have challenges, any issues, what did you enjoy? Something like that. It's time consuming, but also understand that there's a big mandate to include women and youth… Every so often, post something from the mouth of a female or a woman of color. I take tons of pictures, just wandering around in villages, surrounded by women. Nothing else is as safe as that. For people who think the world is unsafe, they need to view, have some conversations, and let the volunteers speak." – Female Volunteer KII*

3. *Consider a peer-to-peer or mentor network to link existing volunteers to new or prospective volunteers.*

Some volunteers raised the point that inexperienced volunteers, particularly women or youth, may be more encouraged to volunteer when supported by an experienced volunteer through ongoing conversation or even paired volunteer assignments. Linking new volunteers with experienced volunteers not only assists with overcoming concerns about how to navigate new cultures, travel logistics, and safety concerns, but also can enable building confidence in performing the assignment activities or managing longer duration assignments.

4. *Format F2F scopes of work using language that is more accessible across contexts and to wider volunteer audiences.*

Finding a match between skills and F2F assignments was a significant barrier to volunteering for both women and youth. To some degree, the underrepresentation of women in the agriculture sector contributes to this challenge. However, perceived lack of match between skill and SOW also causes women and youth to opt-out of assignments. One way to encourage more women and youth to volunteer for F2F assignments is to use language in scopes of work that is less industry specific and relies on less technical jargon and is written in a way that allows them to see a more likely match between their skills and the opportunity.

*"In development, there's certain kinds of buzz words, like 'resources mobilization.' If you're someone in a field not related to development, you may have those skills, but you don't know it because you can't decipher the meaning of those buzzwords. If sometimes the position descriptions were written in a way that was more compatible with the way jobs are written in the USA. If you write 'capacity building,' I wouldn't know what that is, but if you write 'training people to be able to do certain things,' yeah I can do that." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"Provide flexibility in program selection, allowing volunteers to choose projects aligned with their interests, skills, and preferences." – Female Host KII*

5. *Format F2F scopes of work using language that clearly articulates GYSI priorities and/or opportunities to engage with and support women and youth as part of an assignment.*

Given the high level of interest in supporting social good and helping other women and youth, explicitly stating this as a goal or component in F2F scopes of work is highly likely to attract the interest of women and youth volunteers. F2F scopes of work that are not specifically focused on activities targeted at women or youth, such as training for women or youth agri-entrepreneurs, should include explicit language related to the ways in which the assignment is benefitting households and communities as well as inclusion priorities for the assignment, such as promoting participation of women and/or youth.

6. *Conduct additional consultation and research with women who have children under the age of 18.*

Although the survey did not provide significant data showing that childcare was a key factor influencing women's decision not to volunteer, the majority of respondents did not have young children. However, the issue of childcare and household responsibilities emerged strongly in the interviews, suggesting that this is a larger factor that needs to be further explored among women and individuals with children at home. The study should assess the degree to which this factor influences decisions to volunteer and what adjustments F2F could make to make it easier for parents to take up volunteer assignments.

In the meantime, F2F should consider the constraints faced by parents, particularly women, with children under the age of 18 and the likelihood that having young children will impact women's

ability to volunteer for assignments. To promote women's opportunities to volunteer, F2F should consider accommodations for parents such as:

- Budgeting for a childcare subsidy or per diem.
- Offering more remote volunteer assignments or prioritizing remote assignments for women and parents with young children.
- Offering shorter volunteer assignments or letting prospective volunteers know that F2F may be willing to consider whether an assignment can be hybrid (part in-person, part-remote) if accommodations are needed.

*"Some sort of per diem on childcare will be very attractive." – Female Volunteer KII*

*"It might also be family responsibilities. It may be more difficult for women when they are childrearing ages to apply." – Female Volunteer KII*

7. *Provide GYSI capacity building and support to volunteers as part of assignment design.*
   Study findings showed that volunteers have a strong interest in bringing greater gender and youth considerations as part of their volunteer assignments, which aligns with their interest in helping women and youth. While many shared that they are aware of the challenges women and youth face, they are interested in learning more about these specific challenges and need assistance in applying this understanding to the specific work they are undertaking with their volunteer assignments. Providing capacity building and support will also help raise awareness and increase understanding among the smaller group of volunteers who indicated that they do not think gender and youth inclusion is necessary or important.

Volunteers indicated interest in a range of potential resource options, from hands-on to self-paced. Given that current volunteers were aware of existing ACDI/VOCA resources but did not feel confident using them, F2F should first review the existing resources and assess the needs and gaps for improving their usefulness. F2F should then consider whether existing resources should be revised and what additional resources or procedures may be useful to volunteers such as:

> **Promoting LGBTQI+ Safety and Inclusion**
>
> While the survey and interviews did not collect any data regarding LGBTQI+ concerns or factors, it is notable that no respondents self-identified outside of binary categories. The two incidents of anti-LGBTQI+ feedback suggest that it is important that awareness raising and capacity building efforts, as well as F2F procedures, pay attention to increasing acceptance of and safety for LGBTQI+ volunteers.

- Country-specific overviews of key gender and youth information that volunteers should consider when planning their activities.
- Including a gender/youth planning discussion as part of pre-departure planning or assignment co-creation calls.
- Providing access to or requiring volunteers to complete the ACDI/VOCA "Introduction to Gender Concepts" eCourse.

As discussed in recommendation 2, unless determined to be sensitive or proprietary, these materials should be made easily and publicly accessible to both existing and prospective volunteers as they will demonstrate F2F commitment to helping women and youth, provide additional information about how F2F conducts volunteer assignments, and offer insights into the country contexts where assignments will take place.

8. *Provide GYSI capacity building and resources to hosts.*
   While many hosts demonstrated a strong understanding and awareness of the challenges women and youth face in their context, they also showed strong interest in accessing further support for deepening their understanding and applying this knowledge to action. Hosts were

also interested in a range of support options and resources, from consultations to written resources and tutorials.

There is an opportunity to engage hosts in multiple ways here. Because of their knowledge and experience, hosts can be an important resource in developing these resources, and the process of doing this can help raise awareness among hosts who may not be as knowledgeable. For example, hosts would be important stakeholders in reviewing and validating the country-specific overviews discussed in recommendation 7 above.

Recommended actions for engaging hosts as well as building their capacity and developing host specific GYSI resources include:

- Capitalize on volunteer GYSI capacity by developing and implementing an F2F volunteer assignment with the purpose of facilitating GYSI capacity building sessions with hosts in each country (this may be separate volunteer assignments, each focused on a specific country). The focus on these capacity building sessions could be to capture country-specific challenges for women's and youth participation in F2F activities and strategizing methods for promoting increased participation, to guide prospective volunteers and support hosts.
- Develop a host specific GYSI inclusion guide.
- Develop a simple tutorial on steps for promoting women's and youth inclusion.
- Capture video interviews with "GYSI champion" hosts, identified by country directors, who have been highly successful in supporting women's and/or youth participation in F2F activities and disseminate through ACDI/VOCA website, social media, and WhatsApp.

Translate written resources and caption video resources in local languages—if not originally developed in those languages—to make the resources as widely accessible as possible.

9. *Regularly collect feedback from volunteers and hosts that includes information about gender, youth, and social inclusion.*
F2F indicators and reporting requirements do not capture information on volunteer perspectives about gender, youth, or other social factors that impact volunteer experience. While F2F does collect information on the gender balance of activity participants, it does not require collecting age or other social factors, nor do indicators or other reporting methods capture information related to impacts on gender or social dynamics related to volunteer activities. Therefore, it would be helpful for F2F to regularly collect feedback from volunteers, particularly with attention to the challenges, opportunities, and needs of women and youth volunteers. Regular feedback from hosts, such as through mid-program surveys, pause & reflect sessions, or impact assessments, would also enable the project to learn whether efforts to promote increased women and youth participation and engagement are successful and having impacts on empowerment or opportunity for these groups.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: ADDITIONAL DATA

## Table 14: Distribution of Responses to Factors to Decline a Volunteer Opportunity

| | Highly Important | | Somewhat Important | | Neutral | | Not Very Important | | Not at All Important | | Blank or Not applicable | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M |
| Assignment is too long | 38% | 12% | 25% | 24% | 23% | 49% | 11% | 7% | 2% | 5% | 1% | 6% |
| Assignment is too short | 17% | 12% | 19% | 24% | 41% | 59% | 2% | 0% | 17% | 2% | 4% | 3% |
| Concerns about skill match to assignment request | 50% | 34% | 25% | 32% | 13% | 29% | 4% | <1% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Concerns about flying long distances | 2% | 2% | 10% | 10% | 46% | 66% | 8% | 5% | 25% | 15% | 9% | 2% |
| Concerns about traveling to rural areas | 2% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 44% | 61% | 6% | 10% | 27% | 17% | 11% | 2% |
| Financial concerns | 10% | 10% | 15% | 7% | 42% | 68% | 10% | 10% | 15% | 5% | 8% | 10% |
| Health considerations | 13% | 10% | 17% | 46% | 35% | 32% | 6% | 5% | 15% | 5% | 14% | 13% |
| Lack of accessibility or disability accommodations | 0% | 0% | 6% | 7% | 58% | 59% | 4% | 10% | 17% | 15% | 15% | 0% |
| Lack of child or other dependent care coverage | 2% | 7% | 2% | 0% | 54% | 54% | 4% | 7% | 17% | 15% | 21% | 2% |
| Lack of gender balance among host/in-country staff | 2% | 7% | 6% | 10% | 58% | 56% | 8% | 5% | 17% | 10% | 9% | 2% |
| Lack of information about safety and security measures | 23% | 22% | 27% | 25% | 29% | 32% | 4% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 6% | 5% |
| Lack of remote engagement options | 6% | 2% | 6% | 10% | 60% | 63% | 6% | 5% | 13% | 7% | 9% | 13% |
| Lack of support by partner/spouse | 8% | 20% | 13% | 12% | 46% | 46% | 8% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 19% | 15% |
| Lack of support/encouragement by family | 2% | 12% | 15% | 15% | 50% | 51% | 8% | 0% | 10% | 2% | 15% | 20% |
| Lack of university support for volunteering | 2% | 7% | 8% | 10% | 56% | 59% | 4% | 0% | 6% | 2% | 24% | 22% |
| Lack of work/corporate support for volunteering | 4% | 5% | 10% | 10% | 52% | 61% | 8% | 0% | 8% | 5% | 18% | 19% |
| Not able to travel with partner or spouse | 4% | 10% | 4% | 12% | 60% | 54% | 6% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 20% | 17% |
| Not interested in specific country or region | 8% | 0% | 21% | 20% | 44% | 56% | 10% | 10% | 8% | 2% | 9% | 12% |
| Safety or security concerns about travel destination | 29% | 22% | 21% | 29% | 25% | 29% | 8% | 12% | 6% | 2% | 11% | 6% |

## Table 15: Distribution of Responses to Factors to Accept a Volunteer Opportunity

| | Highly Important | | Somewhat Important | | Neutral | | Not Very Important | | Not at All Important | | Blank or Not applicable | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M |
| Accessibility or disability accommodations provided | 2% | 5% | 8% | 15% | 59% | 51% | 2% | 2% | 6% | 15% | 23% | 12% |
| Ability to engage through virtual options | 21% | 12% | 27% | 32% | 29% | 42% | 6% | 2% | 13% | 5% | 4% | 7% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Building or continuing relationships | 65% | 66% | 29% | 29% | 6% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 1% |
| Fulfills educational requirements | 8% | 22% | 4% | 12% | 60% | 41% | 4% | 0% | 10% | 7% | 14% | 8% |
| Learning about a new culture | 79% | 73% | 17% | 20% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Opportunity to help women | 85% | 61% | 13% | 32% | 2% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| Opportunity to help youth | 71% | 63% | 19% | 27% | 8% | 7% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 3% |
| Opportunity to support social good and impact | 90% | 76% | 4% | 17% | 2% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% | 2% |
| Professional development/skill building | 52% | 54% | 31% | 32% | 10% | 12% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5% | 12% |
| Safety and security measures provided | 52% | 29% | 23% | 41% | 17% | 22% | 0% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 6% | 6% |
| Specific country/location | 38% | 20% | 27% | 37% | 27% | 34% | 0% | 0% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 4% |
| Support/encouragement of partner/spouse | 13% | 37% | 27% | 27% | 38% | 24% | 4% | 5% | 6% | 0% | 12% | 7% |
| Support/encouragement of family | 17% | 27% | 21% | 34% | 40% | 27% | 6% | 2% | 6% | 0% | 10% | 10% |
| Traveling to a new geographic location | 50% | 49% | 29% | 34% | 19% | 12% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 3% |
| University support for volunteering | 4% | 6% | 17% | 22% | 50% | 42% | 2% | 10% | 4% | 5% | 23% | 15% |
| Work/corporate support for volunteering | 17% | 10% | 27% | 32% | 35% | 39% | 0% | 5% | 2% | 5% | 19% | 9% |

## ANNEX 2: RAPID DESK REVIEW REFERENCE LIST

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