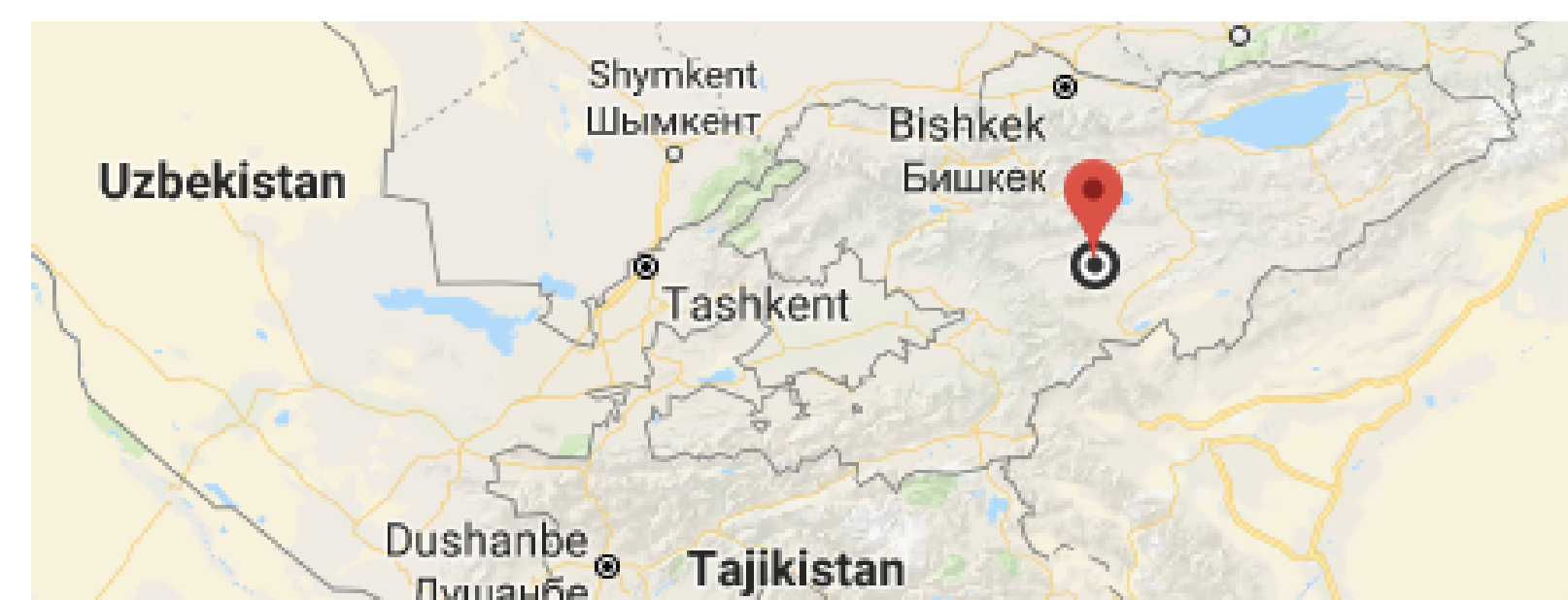




# KYRGYZSTAN

**Kyrgyzstan**, or the Kyrgyz Republic (population 6 million), located in Central Asia, is a landlocked country, bordering the Himalayas and China on the East, and three other landlocked former republics of the USSR (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). The country consists of 6 oblasts, 41 regions, 20 cities, 29 towns and 422 rural administrations. Kyrgyzstan is a rural country: more than 70% of the population lives in rural areas and 64% of villagers are women.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and trade bloc, Kyrgyzstan lost its biggest market and as a consequence, the economy suffered a big blow, and as of 2017, 31.7% of the country's population lives below the poverty line. However, it is worth noting that as the country transitioned to a market economy, its economic performance improved significantly, particularly since 1998. With regards to religion, Kyrgyzstan is a secular state, although Islam is becoming increasingly influential in politics.



## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Kyrgyz Republic has undergone significant political and economic changes, which undoubtedly affected gender equality in the country. In 2010, Rosa Otunbayeva was appointed interim president and became the first female head of state of a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Considerable attention was paid to the development of a gender equality policy since 2010, although implementation remains slow. Women's representation in the parliament increased to 24%.

There is a wide gap in men's and women's rates of participation in the labor force, with 52.3% and 76.6% respectively (data from 2010). Cultural practices, such as the kidnapping of brides and early marriage for girls still persist, but they are being increasingly challenged by women's rights NGOs. However, a legislation equating the abduction of women for marriage against their will with kidnapping under the criminal code was signed into law in January 2013.

The Law On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (2008) establishes the principle of gender equality. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, reformed in 2010, guarantees equal rights and opportunities for men and women and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. A government resolution in May 2012 established the National Council for Gender Development, chaired by the deputy prime minister. A month later, in June 2012, the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2020 was adopted.

**52.3%**  
women's participation  
in the labor force

**24%**  
women's participation  
in the parliament







# WOMEN2030 PROJECT IN KYRGYZSTAN

Rural Women's Association "Alga" Kyrgyzstan, is part of the Women2030 program, which aims to engage women's organizations in the process of achieving the SDGs of 2030 Agenda.

In the framework of the Women2030 Programme, from April to June 2017, "Alga" and WECF conducted a gender assessment in 10 communities in 3 oblasts: Osh, Ysuk-Kul, and Chui. The assessment consisted of focus group discussions and questionnaires. In total, 814 villagers, 601 of which were women, participated in the assessment.

The overall aim of the gender assessment was to explore the population's opinions on and perceptions of the process of implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Kyrgyzstan, with a particular focus on SDG 5 and the distribution of power, resources and opportunities between women and men in Kyrgyz society. The GA showed that, despite the Kyrgyz government's attempts to actively promote gender equality, gender discrimination persist in the society. The results of this GA are presented in this factsheet and form the basis of the Women2030 Shadow Report.



## DEMOGRAPHIC

The gender assessment questionnaires were filled in by 631 people- 450 women (71%) and 181 men (29%), from 10 rural, peri-urban and urban communities in 3 oblasts. Additionally, focus group discussions were carried out with another 151 women and 26 men. The results of the questionnaires are community-generated data, based on a well-founded survey methodology, which can be used as input into the national SDG monitoring.

Customary laws, such as early or unregistered civil marriages, still limit women's access to education and economic resources and violate their inheritance rights.

Rural respondents, especially women, are more dissatisfied with their living conditions than urban respondents.

Women's participation in decision-making at home is reliant on their income. They are largely underrepresented in the political and economic sectors.

Polygamy is technically illegal, but still widely practiced. It has been endorsed by some public figures and 21.7% of the public support the practice, according to a 2017 poll.

Study participants listed improving pre-school child care and getting official marriage and divorce papers as their highest priorities.

**71%**  
of the 631 questionnaire respondents were women

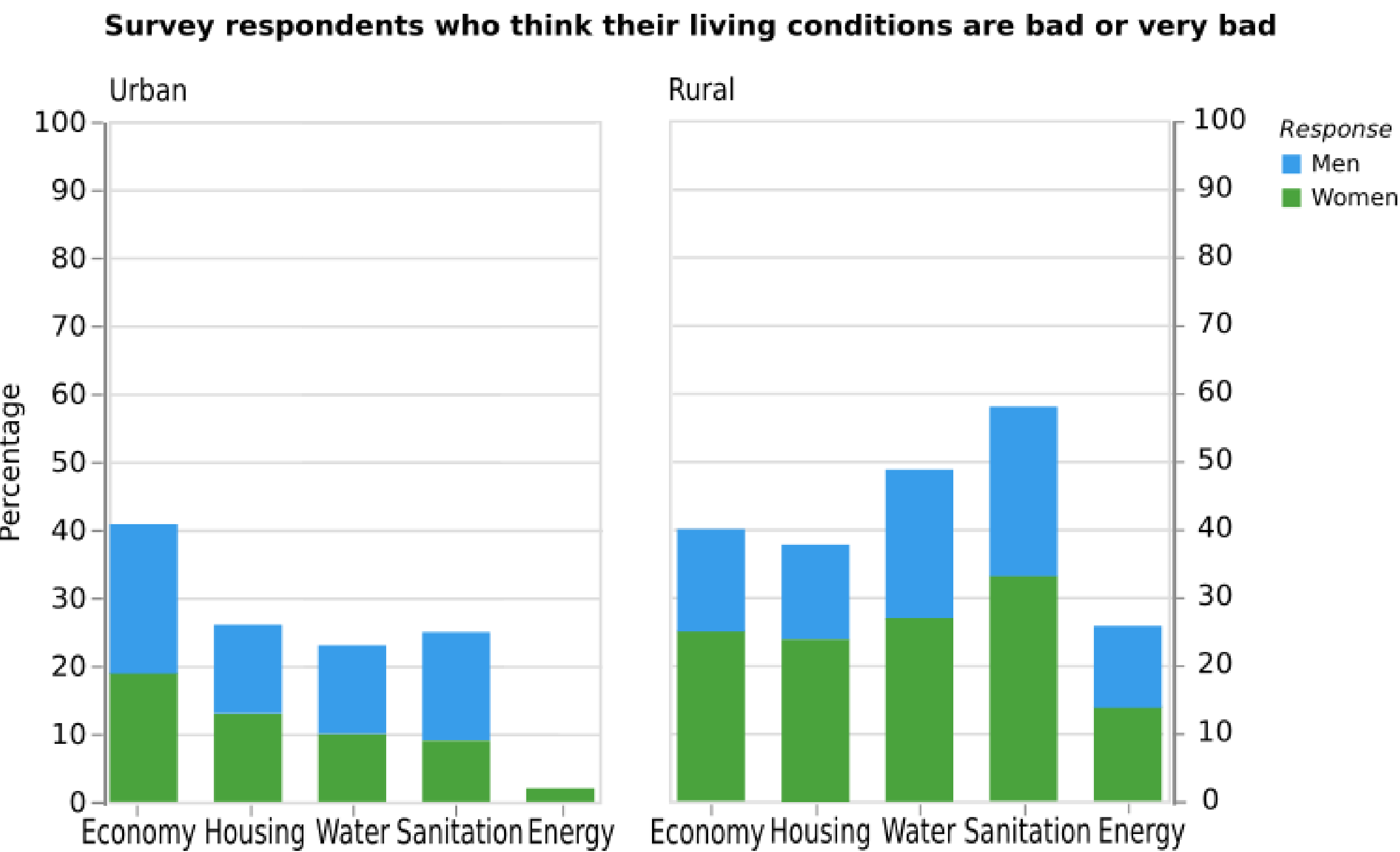
**21.7%**  
of the population support the legalisation of polygamy







# LIVING CONDITIONS

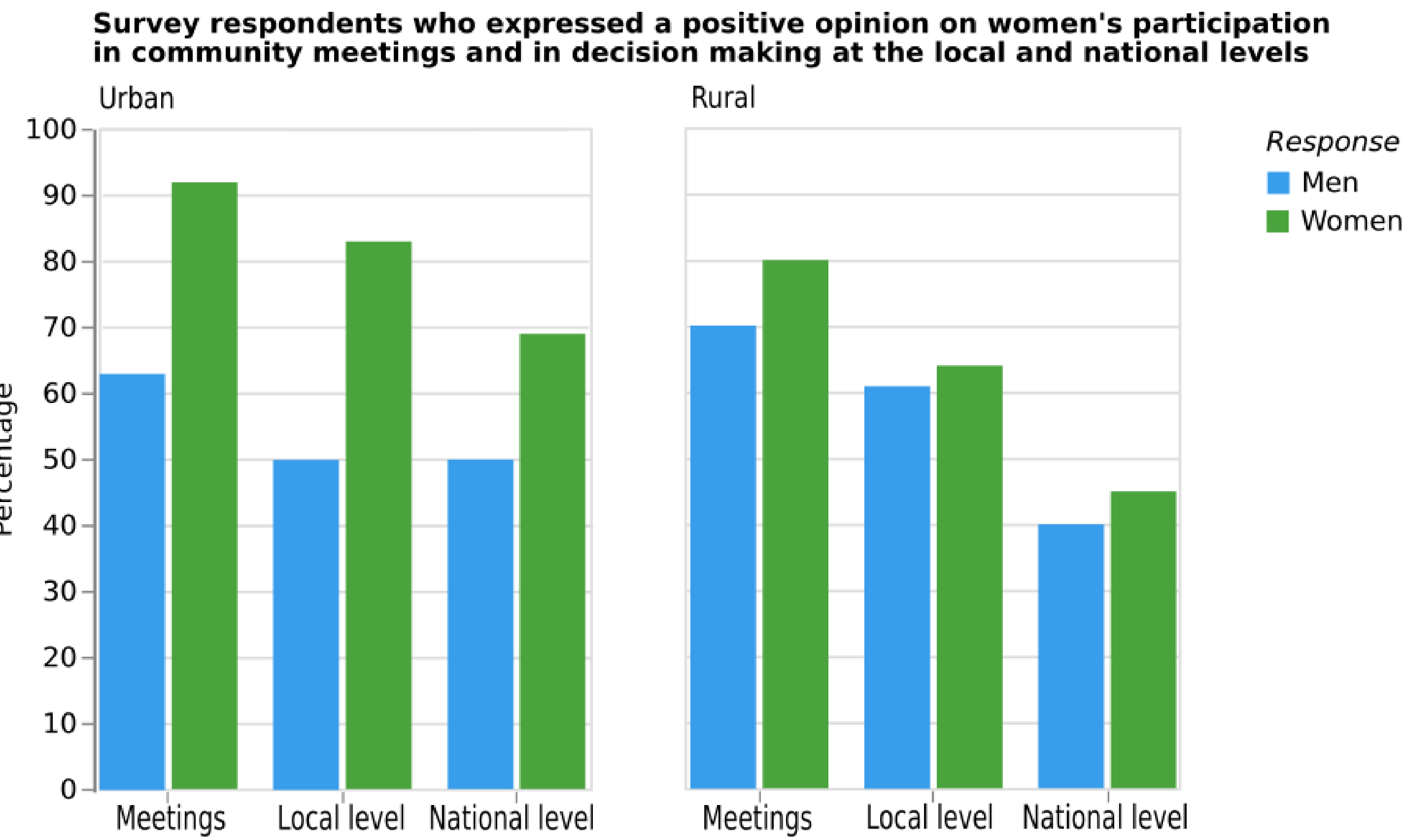


**41%**  
of the respondents  
in urban areas live  
in a bad or very bad  
economic situation

**59%**  
of the respondents in  
rural areas have poor  
or very poor access to  
sanitation services



# DECISION-MAKING



While female questionnaire respondents think they have a decision-making power, especially in their neighbourhoods and on the local level, all FGD participants agreed that the decision-making power belongs to men and the influence of women is very limited. Women's decision-making power in rural regions is particularly limited and it is closely related to their age, employment status and religious/customary practices. Additionally, women typically hold decision-making positions in the education and health care sectors, but remain underrepresented in the political and economic sphere.



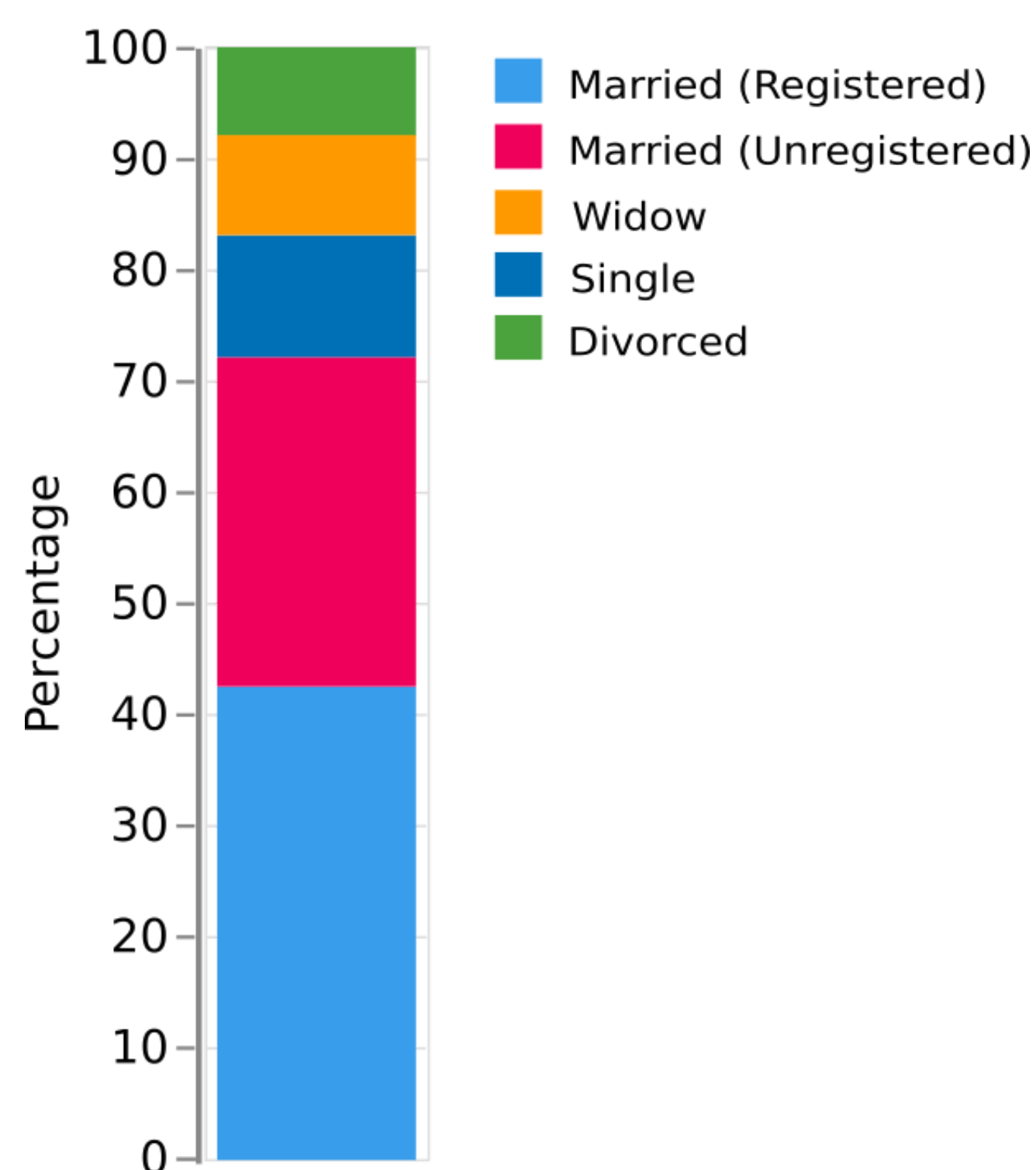




# WOMEN BEFORE THE LAW



Women's marital status



Women and men are materially equal in law but in reality the application of the laws is far from achieving this equality. Customary laws, such as early marriage, unregistered civil marriage, limited or no access to education and inheritance practices governing the access to economic resources continue to dictate women's lives. Discriminatory customary laws govern the right of women in case of divorce.

Women are likely to stay in unwanted marriages, so as not to lose their rights in the household or child custody as these rights are typically vested in the husband. Additionally, men often register property, cars or equipment on their parent's or unmarried siblings' name, so as to circumvent any rights their wife may have in this property upon divorce.



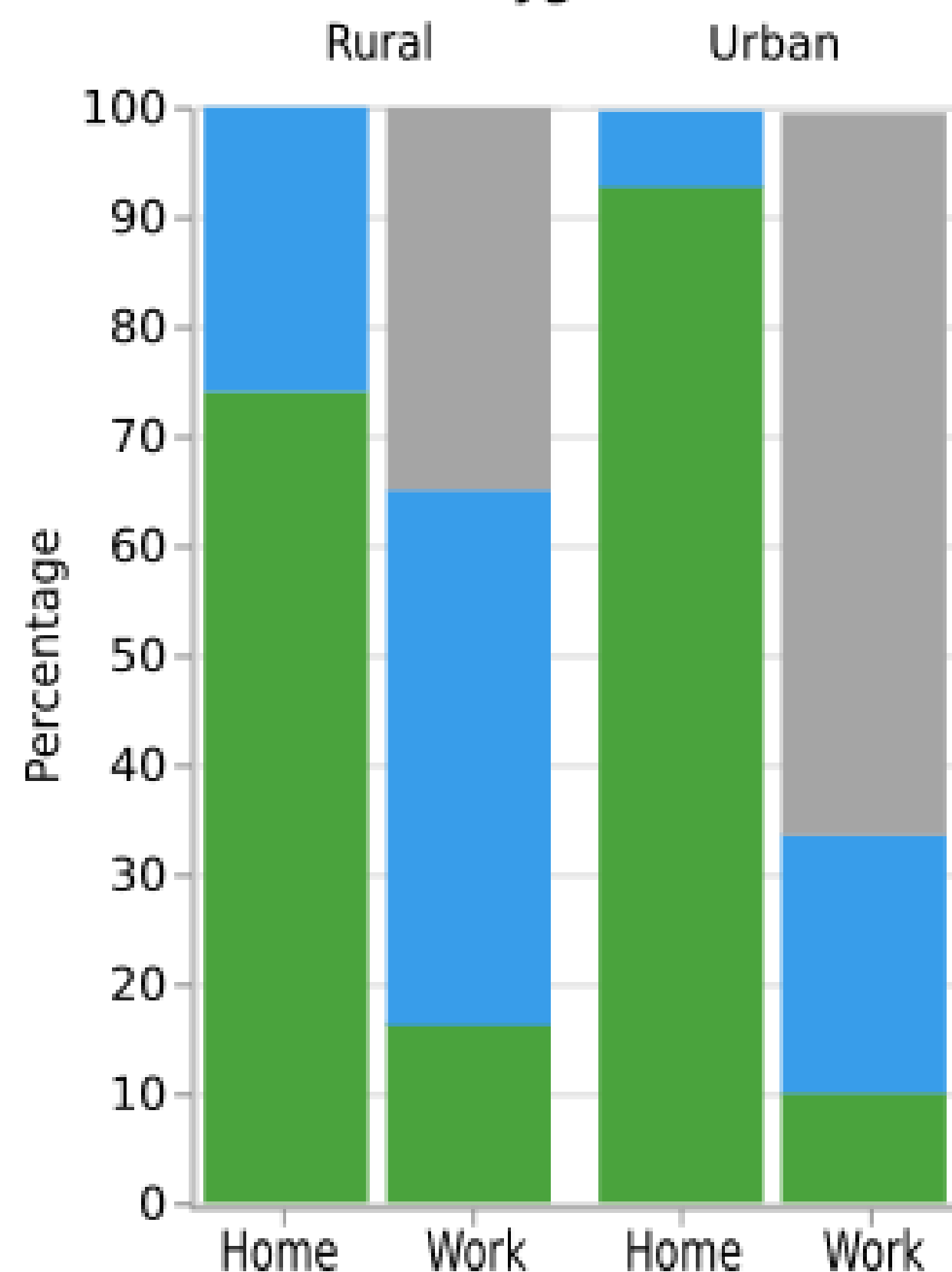
**41%** of women who are married have not registered their union

**3%** of men who are married have not registered their union

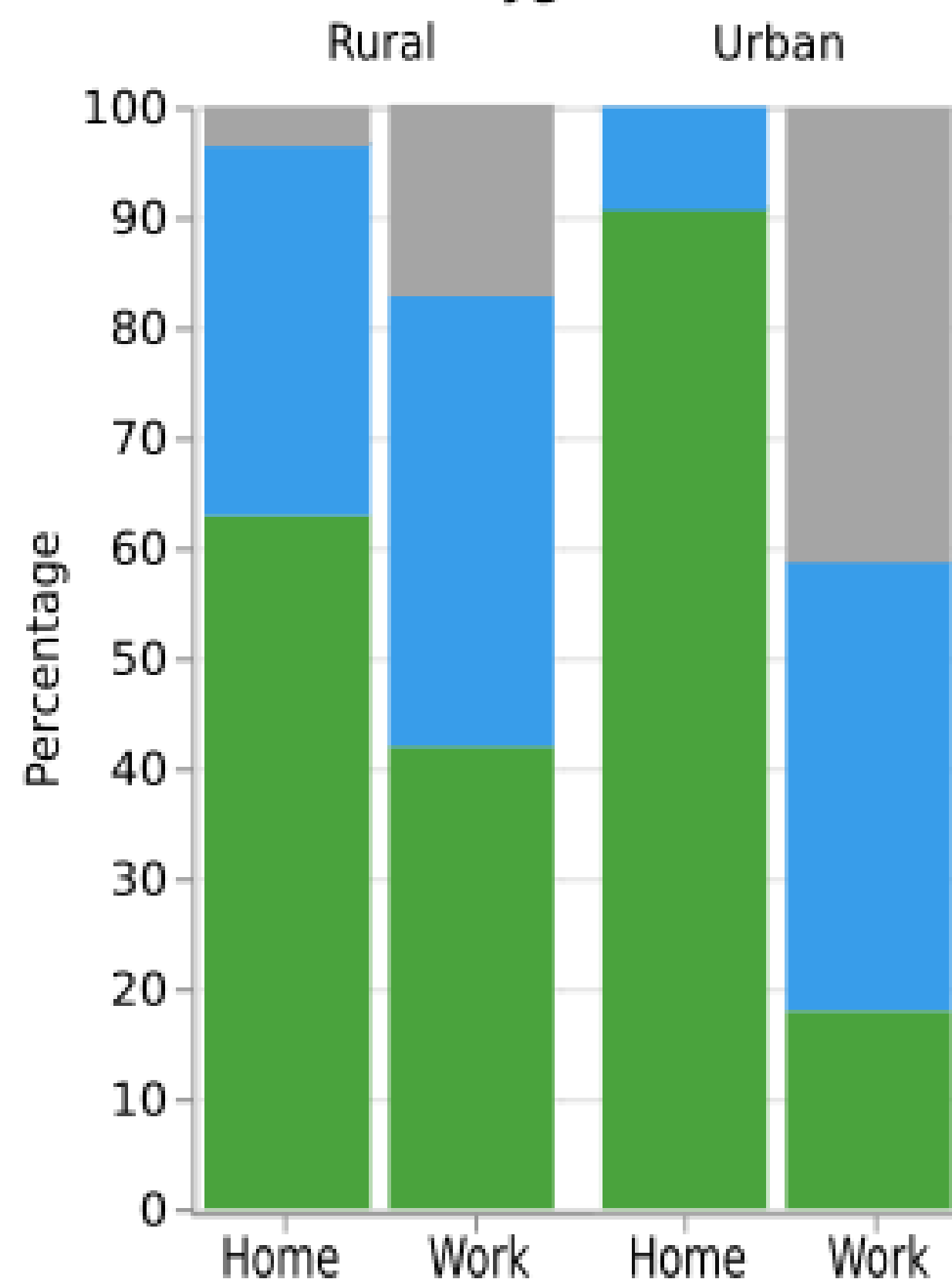


# INADEQUATE HYGIENE

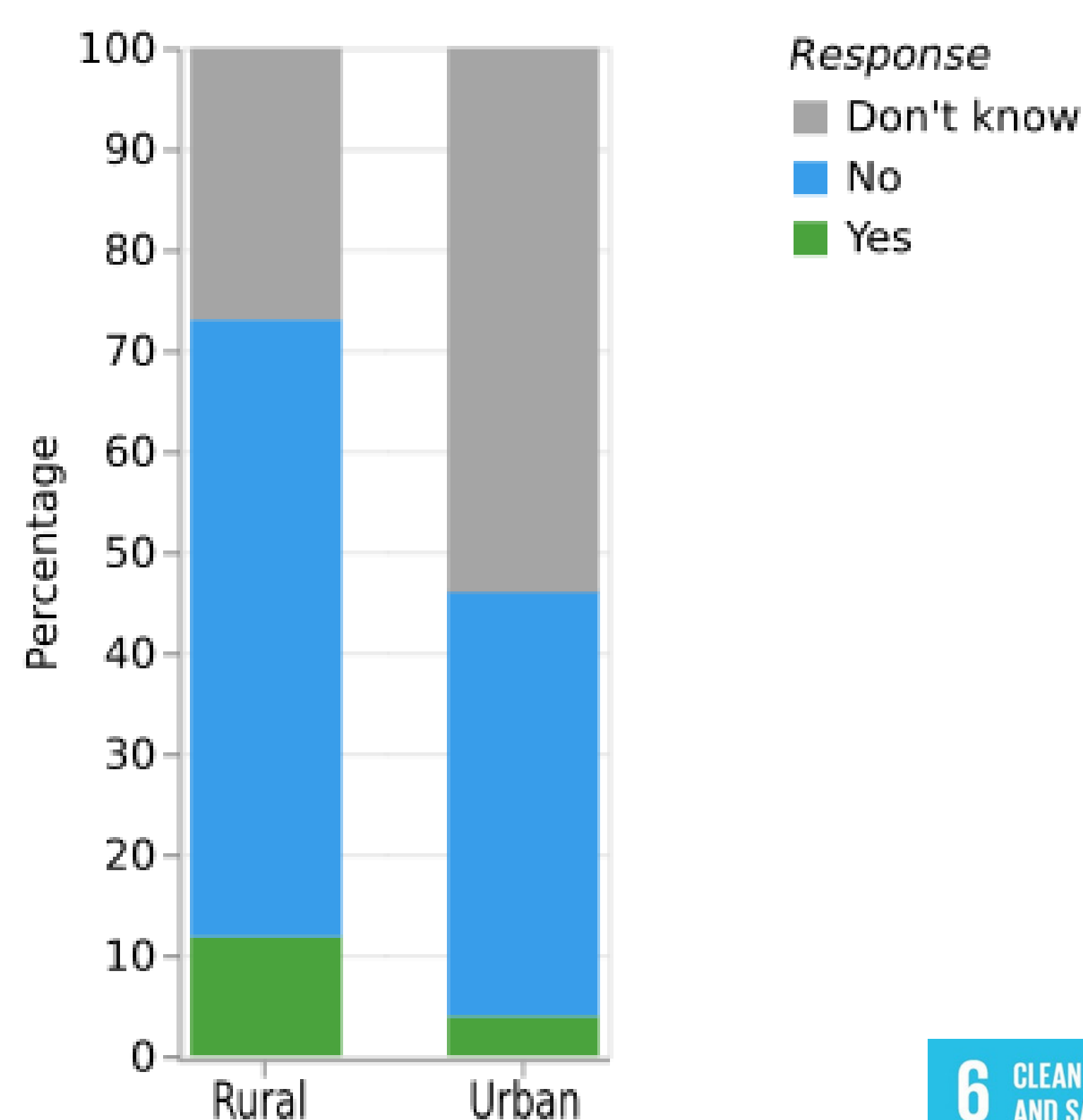
To women: Do you have decent sanitation and hygiene conditions?



To men: Do you have decent sanitation and hygiene conditions?



Do your daughters have decent sanitation and hygiene conditions at school and are they able to wash and change in privacy?



Limited access to sanitation and safe water supplies affects the lives of Kyrgyz women and girls disproportionately. They face the additional burden of collecting and treating water, as well as serious health risks resulting from poor hygiene conditions during their periods or pregnancies.

Public toilets often lack door-locks or even doors, and bad hygiene conditions at schools force girls to run home between classes to change during their periods. Women working in agriculture are also greatly affected because there are no private spaces to change.

