

Kyrgyz Republic Transition Initiative

Case Study Initiative – Executive Summaries

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The KRTI Case Study Initiative

Introduction

The Kyrgyz Republic Transition Initiative (KRTI)

Following Kyrgyzstan's political transition in 2010, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), launched the Kyrgyz Republic Transition Initiative (KRTI) to provide flexible, short term support to address the opportunities and challenges of the transition period and complement other longer-term initiatives of USAID. Since May 2010, KRTI's strategic goal has been to support Kyrgyzstan's efforts to establish a more stable and secure democracy while laying the groundwork for continued long-term development. Based on this mandate, KRTI developed two program objectives: 1.) support the ongoing democratic political transition at the national and local levels; and 2.) address emerging sources of instability and conflict at the community level.

From 2010-2013, KRTI partnered with over 300 local government, civil society and private entities, through nearly 450 small in-kind grants supporting the democratic transition and addressing sources of instability. Like most OTI programs, KRTI awarded small, in-kind grants to local stakeholders, including government, civil society and private entities. To multiply the impact of small activities and achieve a critical mass necessary for change, KRTI clustered grants around specific thematic and issues areas; such as building inclusive, accountable governance, increasing access to objective and reliable information, and expanding services for vulnerable groups. Maintaining a high degree of flexibility, KRTI also targeted smaller issues as they arose, quickly; addressing sources of instability and supporting key government and civil society-led initiatives. Many of the case studies included in this report reflect such issues.

The Case Study Approach

This document contains summaries of a series of case studies KRTI commissioned from independent, third party researchers of a selection of program activities. The purpose of these case studies is twofold. First, they are intended to provide an independent, third party perspective on the results of specific clusters of activities. Researchers were asked to evaluate the validity of KRTI's programmatic assumptions and determine whether activities achieved their intended output and outcome objectives. The studies were also intended to evaluate the success of a group of small grants, aggregating outcomes to determine a broader programmatic result. In this way, the studies are a key component of the program's overall monitoring and evaluation effort. Second, these case studies are intended to identify programmatic and strategic lessons learned and provide recommendations to inform future programming. As KRTI ends, initiatives by government, civil society, and the international community will continue to address the themes and sectors KRTI targeted. These case studies will serve as one means of contributing to future efforts. These case studies will also help to inform stabilization and political transition work more broadly within OTI and USAID.

The seven studies were conducted from June to September 2013. The case study researchers are professionals with experience and contacts within Kyrgyzstan's government and civil society. Researchers prepared reports with the results of desk and field research in a prescribed format, providing not only a review of KRTI activities but also recommendations for future programming initiatives. These case and their findings can be found in their entirety in the KRTI Case Study Initiative publication.

Case Study Researchers

Andrea Barbosa received her law degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and was awarded an “Outstanding Volunteer Service” award for her pro bono work. She completed her undergraduate studies at the same university, graduating Magna Cum Laude in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and ranking first in her class. Since moving to Bishkek, she has worked with IRG, the World Bank and the United Nations World Food Program. Prior to moving to Bishkek, Andrea worked in Immigration Law with several non-profit organizations in Washington D.C. Born and raised in Colombia, South America, she is fluent in Spanish and English. She is learning Russian and speaks elementary Chinese Mandarin.

Amy Noreuil is a Geographic Information Specialist who provides data analysis and mapping support for the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Prior to working for OTI, Amy spent time with the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, American Red Cross International Services and the U.S. Department of State stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Libreville, Gabon. Amy has a BA in International Affairs from the Elliot School of International Affairs and a MA in Geography from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at The George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Farrell Styers is a media analyst and social science researcher. He lived and worked in Kyrgyzstan from August 2010 to September 2013, managing numerous research projects and authoring reports for international clients. Prior to his work in Kyrgyzstan, Farrell worked as a quantitative media and polling analyst for a U.S. government contractor in Washington D.C. and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. His work has been published in *Mining Journal*, a leading industry publication, and Registan.net, a website devoted to Central Asia research and analysis. His work was presented at the annual Operational Research and Systems Analysis conference, and he has guest-lectured at several universities on media research and data visualization. Farrell received his Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from George Washington University.

Kimairis Toogood recently served as Senior Peace-building Trainer and Facilitator with International Alert in Kyrgyzstan, implementing an EU-funded mediation project by training local community-based mediation trainers in evaluative and facilitative mediation. Previously, she served as a Conflict Prevention Officer with the U.S. State Department's Office for the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, and as a Conflict Prevention Specialist with the United Nations Development Program in Osh. Kim worked pro-bono with Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, designing, monitoring and evaluating projects on capacity building of local NGOs. Kim published a Springer Publications' book chapter titled "Civil Society in Central Asia" and is working on an article on "Civil Society Development in Tajikistan" with Associate Professor Anthony Wanis-St. John of American University. Kim is a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

M-Vector Research & Consulting is an international company providing a range of services: from collection and analysis of market and social information to development and introduction of management decisions, trainings for top-managers and other company members on effective management and marketing. M-Vector works with local and foreign commercial companies and international donor organizations, providing them with research, consulting, and training in Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Russia. The company has offices in Almaty, Bishkek, Osh, Dushanbe, and Khudjand.

Supporting Reform in Judicial Selection

By Andrea Barbosa

Following the 2010 revolution and ethnic conflicts in the south, Kyrgyzstan went through a constitutional reform that included restructuring the judiciary and the judicial selection process. Changes included the creation of the Council on the Selection of Judges (CSJ), which was tasked with reviewing applications and nominating candidates to the Supreme Court (SC), the Constitutional Chamber (CC) and local judgeships around the country.

The formation of the CSJ, as well as the selection of judges in 2011, was highly criticized for its lack of transparency, resulting in the formation of the Citizens' Council to Control Court Systems (CCCCS). The CCCCCS, an independent coalition of 14 civil society organizations, acted as a watchdog, and aimed at ensuring awareness and increasing engagement of the public in the selection of judges.

As a result of civil society's involvement, public opinion was made a factor in the consideration of candidates. The selection process was also suspended until 2012, when amendments to the laws were approved, and a new selection process that used more objective selection criteria, including an electronic test, standardized interviews and a voting stage, was put in place.

During this period, civil society, with the support of KRTI, implemented several initiatives with the goal of increasing awareness and citizen engagement in the judicial selection process, while increasing the transparency and accountability of the judiciary. Activities included a nationwide media campaign, a telephone hotline where citizens across the country could report abuses by judges nominated to the positions, a website, public receptions and press conferences. Civil society also monitored court hearings and the selection process in 2012, including parallel scoring of candidates for crosschecking and validation. KRTI also supported the CSJ with 25 computers in order to avoid interruption in the selection process and any lack of consistency in ranking and voting.

The results of this case study showed that KRTI's fast and flexible response model allowed its civil society partners to implement their initiatives timely, quickly and efficiently, and to build the momentum required, at the right time, for long-term support of the ongoing judicial and legal reforms. The initiatives increased awareness and engagement in the process of nominating, screening and selecting judges, and the demand for these services continues to rise, illustrating the growing trust that citizens have on the services provided and their positive effect on the judicial reform. Civil society activities were also successful at engaging citizens in the selection process, by allowing for the proper collection and consideration of citizens' complaints during the selection process.

Although there is still much room for improvement, these activities increased transparency and promoted accountability of the process, which became more open and introduced objective criteria. Civil society activities also had several secondary unintended outcomes, including the positive change in attitude of judges across the country and members of the CSJ, who began collaborating with the CCCCCS. Finally, the results of this case study showed that the CCCCCS had the influence, leadership skills and right ideas to provide a strong foundation for further initiatives that are essential for promoting transparency of the judicial system.

Ministry of Internal Affairs Reform

By Andrea Barbosa

Kyrgyzstan's 2010 political crisis highlighted the need for immediate and targeted assistance to address emerging sources of instability and conflict that had the potential to derail the ongoing democratic transition. The absence of police action during these events pointed towards the dysfunction in the MIA as one of the main sources of instability. Multiple attempts to reform the MIA have been initiated since the country's independence over two decades ago. However, these attempts have not shown any positive results; they have not involved civil society, and they have disregarded public opinion.

Significant efforts to achieve a successful reform in the MIA marked the year 2011. Different NGOs around the country began collecting information independently from the MIA on changes that needed to be done in the Ministry and on their vision of the reform. An interdepartmental committee composed of relevant government and civil society representatives was also established to draft the official reform proposal. Nonetheless, the committee's work proved to be no different from prior practices during earlier reforms. Civil society representation in the committee was minimal, and all of civil society's suggestions were ignored. This resulted in civil society's ultimate withdrawal from the committee and the establishment of the Civil Union for Reforms and Results (Civil Union). For the next year and a half, the Civil Union worked on developing an alternative proposal to the reform focused on including the views of the population. The Civil Union also launched a campaign to collect the necessary 10,000 signatures required by the law On Legislative Initiatives by the People that would allow for the submission of civil society's proposal as a draft law in Parliament.

During this period and with the support of KRTI, the Civil Union implemented several initiatives with the goal of persuading the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan to consider civil society's recommended reforms to the MIA, while supporting inclusive decision-making and efforts to hold the MIA more accountable and transparent to citizens. Activities included several public forums, workshops, a website, TV clips, and the collection of citizens' recommendations and signatures. As a result of Civil Union activities, positive changes to law enforcement bodies have been observed, and civil society's ideas on how to reform the MIA were included in the official reform concept.

The results of this case study showed that KRTI's timely and effective support allowed its civil society partners to implement their initiatives successfully and to build the momentum required for long-term support of the ongoing MIA reforms. A strong national network of local NGOs from around the country allowed the Civil Union's message to be widely spread and made the initiatives truly nationwide. Through its advocacy campaign, the Civil Union was able to raise awareness and inform the population about the MIA reform and the alternative concept. Most importantly, the campaign allowed citizens to get involved in the drafting of the proposal through feedback and recommendations. Finally, the initiatives allowed the alternative proposal to gain traction and support in a few months' time, leading to the consideration and inclusion of some of civil society's recommendations into the official reform concept. Currently, some of these recommendations are being implemented, and the Union's advocacy activities are being considered "good practice" by other countries, which have recently started their reform processes.

Although there is still much room for improvement, the country is moving in the right direction. By finally acknowledging the importance of civil society's inclusion in the reform process, these activities have increased transparency in the MIA, and efforts

continue in order to make this latest attempt a true and effective reform. Civil society activities also had several secondary unintended outcomes including the positive change in attitude of government officials, Parliament, the police, and the MIA. The peaceful and effective collaboration between diverse groups in the north and the south was also an unforeseen positive outcome of the activities. The results of this case study showed that the Civil Union had the influence, leadership skills, and right ideas to not only have its recommendations considered and incorporated into the official concept, but also to successfully convince decision makers to collaborate with the public and civil society.

Developing a Professional, Objective Media

By Farrell Styers

Following the 2010 political upheaval in Kyrgyzstan, there was a clear need for improvements in the professionalism, independence, and reliability of the country's media. A free and engaged press is a cornerstone to a successful democracy and as such, Kyrgyzstan's government, civil society organizations, and international donor organizations all pushed media reform efforts in the years after the 2010 revolution.

KRTI supported four rounds of nationwide media consumption research and associated activities from early 2011 to September 2013. The research was intended to allow key stakeholders such as domestic media content producers and managers and government messengers to more effectively respond to their audiences, and grow their market share. By focusing outlets on actual audience behaviors, KRTI also sought to increase advertising revenues, allowing media managers more independence from the influence of financial backers with politicized agendas.

Research for this case study found that the first wave of research was met with equal parts interest and suspicion. Interlocutors described reserved interest amongst nearly everyone in the media industry following the first survey. These reservations were driven by the general prevalence of corruption and political / commercial interference with prior attempts to generate significant media consumption data, and a general lack of familiarity with how to strategically maximize the use of research to build audience flow and expand market share. Nonetheless, there was enough interest to spur a second round of research.

The second round of surveying proved to be the most pivotal in the project. It gave the first glimpse into changes over time, allowing outlets to see how their programming decisions affected their ratings. It was also at this point that the Joint Media Industry Committed (JMIC), a consortium of more than 20 public media outlets, private media outlets and advertising agencies was created. While many of these organizations are direct competitors, they also realized the interest the entire industry had in participating in this research and hence the need to cooperate. The subsequent two rounds of audience research were overseen and partially funded by JMIC, with continued support from KRTI.

JMIC's "ownership" of the research went some way in allaying the early suspicions among stakeholders, generating greater trust in later waves of research. Suspicions were also overcome by the immediate interest in the data by new advertisers. As the advertisers began insisting that the data be used for ad placement and pricing, advertising agencies and outlets responded.

One of KRTI's final efforts with the media consumption research was to provide JMIC with the potential to become a stable and sustainable organization, operating without USAID funding. Many interviewees were skeptical about the success of JMIC, or the continuation of media consumption research, without USAID support, but there are indicators that the organization may succeed. There was unequivocal support for continued consumption research, regardless of who conducted it, among those interviewed for this report. Waves three and four also resulted in direct financial support from JMIC members, a sign of commitment to the project by JMIC members.

The significant programming changes made by several outlets in response to the research are among the most tangible impacts of KRTI's work. The country's largest and fastest growing outlets all made substantial programming changes in efforts to win and retain audiences – achieving one of the explicitly stated goals of the grants.

In addition to political interference, Kyrgyzstan's media is also young and inexperienced. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most practitioners were unfamiliar with the editorial practices of free media. This problem was compounded by a "brain drain" as the Russian literati returned home. The media here has often been limited more by shortcomings among the media themselves than government or political pressure.

The local contractor selected for the work has made real improvements through the various waves - something noted even by independent observers. However, many of the project challenges and shortcomings can be traced back to the steep learning curve and limitations faced by the contractor. There is still a need for improved research methods, tools, and analysis.

While it is not possible to say with certainty whether this new focus on audience dynamics has systematically reduced political manipulation in the media, there were two conspicuous examples of successful resistance to political pressures that were directly attributable to KRTI's work. In one, the director of the public broadcaster was able to successfully

resist political pressure by using the data to support his position. In the other, an outlet in southern Kyrgyzstan has started work on Uzbek-language programming, in response to audience research that showed a large potential market. In addition, interviewees described a notable improvement in local media programming as a result of KRTI's work, creating a fairer and more responsive media sector, enhancing the sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan's media and instilling a greater sense of national pride among viewers and practitioners alike.

Increasing Access to Multi-Language Media

By Farrell Styers

After ethnic violence swept across southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010, nearly all Uzbek-language media outlets were shuttered or their Uzbek-language programming eliminated. KRTI responded with a series of grants aimed at bringing minority language media back to southern Kyrgyzstan. These efforts included five grants, shown here in order of implementation:

OSH020	Increasing Public Access to Post-Conflict Progress Reports: Osh & Jalalabad
OSH058	Increasing Access to Information about Reconstruction Services in the South
OSH149	Strengthening Independent Uzbek-Language Media Outlets
OSH168	Increasing Balanced and Reliable News Programming on Yntymak Radio
OSH176	Creating Uzbek-Language Television Programming in Jalalabad

Viewed together, there was a notable shift from providing emergency, post-conflict information to general minority-language media assistance. There was also a shift from print to electronic and broadcast formats. These shifts are emblematic of the international donor community's recognition of both the changing community needs across their three years of programming, and the lessons learned through the programming process.

As the communities affected by the 2010 conflict began to recover and response efforts were formalized, the information needs, especially among the Uzbek community, shifted from reconstruction and recovery to general news and information. As KRTI implemented several waves of media consumption research, there was also recognition of formats and outlets that offered the greatest audience reach and potential for programming efforts.

KRTI's efforts were generally successful in bringing news and information to the minority Uzbek community in southern Kyrgyzstan – the target audience for most multi-language media programming efforts. Projects were implemented across a range of formats and geographic areas.

Interviews with independent sources and project stakeholders revealed positive impacts from all of the multi-language media grants. Without KRTI's efforts and the few other efforts of international aid organizations, there would have been essentially no Kyrgyzstan-based, Uzbek-language news and information available for Kyrgyzstan's large Uzbek minority, after 2010.

There were two central challenges faced during programming. The first was political opposition. Uzbek-language media is a highly sensitive political topic in Kyrgyzstan, and efforts to promote it were met with a range of opposition efforts. The most salient of these was during the planned broadcast of an Uzbek language television program, which elicited strong public and private responses from the Interior Ministry, local government officials, and citizen groups.

The second problem was the overall weakness of the Kyrgyz media market. Outlets are hampered by a limited pool of advertisers, poor target audience information, and constant political interference (often taking the form of a quid pro-quo of media support in exchange for financing). This has created a situation where most outlets must rely on outside funding, either from international donors or political patrons, which limits the long-term sustainability of program objectives.

Grantees and media experts agreed that KRTI's support has been crucial for the survival of multi-language media. If possible, support should continue in the future with a focus on long-term, market-supported viability.

Support & Tools for Inclusive and Transparent Local Governance

By Kimairis Toogood

The case study on local governance confirmed KRTI's assumptions regarding the current situation with decentralization and necessary programming to address this issue. Strategic change agents at all levels of government as well as highly motivated and innovative partners have enabled this work to produce significant attitudinal and behavioral change in piloted areas. Sadly, the lack of political will and financial backing for decentralization from the national government (mostly due to inconsistent policies), as well as lack of capacity among several key actors, pose a threat to the long-term impact potential to the tools and processes enacted under these and follow on activities.

Several activities were considered illustrative of the support KRTI was providing to the issue of local governance reform. These activities were nation-wide. Therefore, several northern activities were observed, including BIS225: "Strengthening Local Government Service Delivery through Practical Guide"; BIS247: "Enhancing accountability and transparency in government spending"; BIS275/285: "Increasing Dialogue between Talas City Council and Citizens"; and BIS303: "Bolstering effectiveness of City Kenesh citizen engagement through trainings". Southern activities include OSH141: "Increasing Citizen Engagement in the Public Budgeting Process"; OSH206: "Building Responsive Local Councils in Southern Kyrgyzstan"; OSH074: "Increasing access to information about local government fiscal status"; and OSH120: "Increasing Access to Information about aiyl okmotus (AO) Services." Through these activities, a number of KRTI tools and processes were initiated and implemented; including a management guidebook as well as other management manuals for local councilmembers on a legal framework, a land code framework, and designing and reading local budgets (to improve the performance and basic capacity of local officials). They also included training on and support for okmot.kg (a government initiative for online budget oversight and procurement); open budget and equipment provision hearing training (to improve community oversight and feedback of the budget provision of local services), a community-based performance monitoring tool (a survey that allows citizens to evaluate the performance of their community services), as well as several media-based support tools such as newspaper and newsletter publications and informational brochures.

Overall, the outputs and outcomes were achieved, and several unintended consequences (i.e. broader depth and breadth of processes than intended) were noted in spite of those issues mentioned above. While the footprint of activity implementation was small relative to the identified need, the communities selected were actively engaged and the stakeholders were not only thankful for the assistance, but also ready to initiate future activities independently.

As the March 2013 USAID Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Assessment indicates, where there is potentially high impact in the local governance sector, but marginal political will, there is a need to combine diplomatic engagement with community-based approaches that are flexible. Recommendations to continue the success of processes initiated under KRTI's local governance program component include coordinated and increased pressure on national government actors by international partners and donors to encourage decisive and consistent decision-making on issues related to decentralization, as well as support to the highly-capable civil society actors which have been delivering a number of public services in the absence of delivery by state actors such as the State Agency for Local Self-Government and Inter-Ethnic Affairs.

Highlighted Key Findings for this study include:

- *The appropriate identification of project needs:* The focus on building the capacity of new AO Kenesh members who were elected to their new positions in 2012 was strategic and important to the broader political transition, considering their awareness that over 80% of the Kenesh members were new to their job and that they would be in their newly elected positions for a full four year term (through 2016).
- *Lack of Vision and Consistency for the Process of Government Decentralization by the National Kyrgyz Government Inhibits Long-term Impact Potential of KRTI Processes:* KRTI tools met the needs of civil servants, but tend to be a stopgap measure in the absence of the state having a coherent and consistent strategy to implement decentralization. However, the project was able to facilitate significant *buy-in* for concepts of good and effective governance among the Ministerial/National and Local Level Representatives as well as Direct and Indirect Project Partners through KRTI tools.
- *Strategy of Working with Knowledgeable and Well-Respected Project Partners as well as Strategic “Change Agents” was Beneficial:* The KRTI strategy of selecting partners based on interest and ability to deliver activities was very sound and logical. Their performance throughout these projects is commendable and even though the project period has ended, almost all respondents discussed possibilities for future projects.
- *Unexpected Trickle Down Effect of KRTI Programming at the Community Level:* KRTI tools were noted as having a wider reach than just directly targeted project communities. Also, processes such as open budget hearings that include democratic decision-making on budget, priority-setting, and citizen-state engagement around public hearings have changed not just the attitudes of participating community members, but also the behavior of both citizens and local authorities responsible to their communities. This unintended scope and reach of the project indicates it's highly effective.

Increasing the Legitimacy, Transparency, & Accountability of Urban Development

By Kimairis Toogood

The process of urban development planning has been a highly contentious aspect of nation building both during the Soviet era and after independence in 1991, for its break-away countries.

The United Nations Human Settlements Program, UN-HABITAT, has supported global efforts to promote socially and environmentally sustainable growth in towns and cities, both of which have grown at unprecedented rates. In 1950, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Just 50 years later, this rose to one-half and will continue to grow to two-thirds, or 6 billion people, by 2050. *Cities are now home to half of humankind.*¹ In its 2009 Human Settlements Global Dialogue Series, No 5 titled "Twenty Years of Transition: The Evolution of Urban Planning in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, 1989-2009," UN Habitat evaluates how the breathtaking post-communist transformation affected urban areas in the region. It also outlines how urban planning—the indispensable public function that aims to guide urban growth—evolved to respond to new urban challenges.²

The quality of public service delivery and maintenance of public infrastructure in the urban areas sharply deteriorated after independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and this was further complicated by the emergence of new and the growth of existing squatter communities in some Southeast European and Central Asian cities is fueled by the inability of governments to address the needs of a growing population of urban poor.³ While Central Asian republics experienced a low rate of rural-to-urban movement in the years immediately following Independence and generally low numbers of population in urban centers during the Soviet era, the region did experience a continuously high birth rate unlike other former Soviet countries, and this challenged the previous planning for urbanization in a way that the central government was not prepared to handle.⁴ The newly independent governments approached urban development and city planning as an opportunity to centralize decision-making; however, in almost all post-Soviet countries, this strategy has been found to be ineffective, as citizen inclusion is a necessity for more sustainable urbanization processes. The case study on KRTI's support to the urban development and planning process in Kyrgyzstan has addressed the needs identified by civil society, and has worked to institutionalize processes to ensure community engagement in the decision-making process as well as citizen empowerment.

Several activities were considered illustrative of the support KRTI provided to urban planning and development. These activities were nation-wide, using a KRTI methodology of follow-on projects based on previously implemented tools in both the north and south. Specifically, BIS269: "Investigating Citizen Access to Urban Development Plans;" BIS291: "Providing STTA support to develop consultative and participatory Bishkek Urban Development;" OSH123: "Providing legal support for

¹ UN Habitat, "Organizational Mandate"

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=2467&catid=1&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>

² Human Settlements Global Dialogue Series, No 5 titled "Twenty Years of Transition: The Evolution of Urban Planning in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, 1989-2009, p 1

³ Human Settlements Global Dialogue Series, No 5 titled "Twenty Years of Transition: The Evolution of Urban Planning in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, 1989-2009, p 12

⁴ Human Settlements Global Dialogue Series, No 5 titled "Twenty Years of Transition: The Evolution of Urban Planning in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, 1989-2009, p 21

Monueva street residents;” and OSH209: “Providing Independent Appraisals of Homes to be Demolished by Osh Master Plan” were reviewed for this case study. The purpose of these activities was to explore opportunities to establish or improve the mechanisms for civil society and government to partner in ways that facilitate the inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process regarding urban development in Bishkek and Osh, two of Kyrgyzstan’s largest cities. In both cases, the cities were recovering from destabilizing conflict: Bishkek’s April 2010 revolution and Osh’s June 2010 violence.

Several KRTI tools and processes managed to successfully achieve the output (i.e. the production of an informative documentary, and the provision of legal counseling and independent, third party assessments of property values in affected area), outcome (i.e. better enabling residents in affected areas to negotiate with local government officials during urban development to increase transparency and accountability in local government decision making), and an impact objective (i.e. KRTI activities sought to model open and transparent urban planning techniques including participatory urban strategy development process).

Highlighted Key Findings for this study include:

Timing & Identification of Project Needs Appropriate: While timing for the activities conducted in Osh is complex and difficult to assess, overall, KRTI activities were found to be successfully designed to meet the needs of the target communities and were delivered within a period of time when the issues were still pressing to the aforementioned target communities. Therefore, the activities enabled citizen empowerment with knowledge of what they are afforded to within the law, and the project partners and their hired lawyers successfully instilled that empowerment in highly vulnerable communities selected for the activity implementation.

Informative Tools Beneficial to Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries: Considered an unintended consequence of the project, the information produced for the KRTI activities were able to reach a wider audience than those directly targeted, indicating that the information-sharing techniques were deemed useful to the wider public. Also, evidence indicates that there were also attitudinal changes among project partners around the issue of urban planning due to the implementation of the KRTI activities.

New Procedures for Citizen-State Engagement Established: Perhaps the most outstanding example of a change that occurred as a result of the KRTI activities in Osh City was the drafting of standards of operations (SOP) between civil society and the commission that reviews applications for the use of urban spaces. The procedures were drafted by the commission that is composed of civil society and local officials; however, due to the lack of political will and highly bureaucratic structure of the government, the SOP still needs to be approved by the Ministry of Justice, and project partners are unsure of the likelihood of this final step being accomplished

Activities Considered Contentious to Municipal Authorities; and trust was Increased between at-risk communities and Osh City Administration: KRTI tools designed to increase citizen-state engagement, facilitated by NGO Interbilim, were successfully implemented due to the good relationship the NGO has with the Municipal government. This means their selection as a project implementing organization was excellent on the part of KRTI. Therefore, while municipal officials remain skeptical of the intention of KRTI in enabling tools designed to shift the status quo, and therefore, challenge the power and authority of municipal government, the leverage provided by NGO Interbilim created space for a moderate level of civil society/citizen and local authority trust-building.

Community engagement was understandably high throughout the activities even though stakeholder participation (i.e. Osh City officials) was challenging throughout the interventions in the south. And while the majority of the substantive work was done in the south, progress towards specific project outputs and outcomes as well as impact objectives was also observed in the north. Overall, the processes laid significant groundwork for future follow-on work and will be recommended for future engagements with municipal and national governments to assure there is continued success.

The result of the case study was a series of recommendations for continuing assistance to urban development and planning in Kyrgyzstan including the importance of timing and the use of leverage to the successful implementation of activities in contentious contexts that lack full political will. Also, beneficiaries and partners noted the highly successful nature of printed and multi-media materials for both directly and indirectly affected communities and reaching wider audiences than those intended under the project scope.

Socioeconomic Mapping & Conflict Analysis in Kyrgyzstan

By Amy Noreuil

This case study provides an overview of the KRTI rich experience in socioeconomic mapping and conflict analysis. The goal is to take the lessons learned and best practices from those experiences, and share them with organizations and donors who can use them to guide future programming. Efforts were made to include practical insights for both program and technical officers as they contemplate similar interventions in Kyrgyzstan or other environments.

KRTI funded several innovative activities to support access to objective, reliable information and inform local discussions between communities, civil society, and the Government of Kyrgyzstan. The April 2010 political revolution and the June 2010 ethnic violence demonstrated the importance of ensuring that both donors and government understand the underlying sources of conflict and tension, and channel resources and attention into the most critical areas. To bolster the availability of credible information and data on the south following the ethnic violence in June 2010, KRTI partnered with ACTED to conduct research on root causes of conflict and support access to relevant data sets to inform the design of recovery and conflict mitigation activities in southern, rural Kyrgyzstan. KRTI went on to fund the collection and mapping of infrastructure activities that attempted to mitigate conflict through targeted interventions and the dissemination of perception survey data and crowd-sourced information on security and the MIA.

These activities ultimately captured significant lessons learned and best practices. KRTI's experiences offer important insight for those hoping to:

- Design effective data collection and mapping activities that attempt to pull unstructured data into a public portal and share that information with partners;
- Create trainings for local government and community leaders on how to use socioeconomic data to drive budgeting processes;
- Use participatory mapping and early warning networks to better understand under conflict dynamics;
- Crowd-source information as part of a larger advocacy or transparency campaign.

Building Confidence & Reducing Tensions through Public Infrastructure & Irrigation Rehabilitation

By M-Vector

Kyrgyzstan's public infrastructure – including schools, parks, government offices, streetlights, and electricity and irrigation networks – has gradually but steadily deteriorated over the past 20 years. Poor maintenance, budgetary constraints, financial mismanagement, and revenue loss due to corruption inhibit local officials from repairing or replacing critical public works. Anger over the sharp decline in services and collapsing infrastructure played a major role in the April 2010 political transition, and perceptions of unequal access to resources contributed to ethnic tensions in the south, in June 2010.

Since 2010, KRTI has used the rehabilitation and renovation of public infrastructure as a way of demonstrating the ability of the government to respond to community priorities, build the community, and mitigate ethnic tension as well as improve local economies and livelihoods. Early projects included providing immediate equipment to key national institutions like the President's office, Parliament, and the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development. The program then focused on the rehabilitation of shared public infrastructure such as streets lights, traffic lights, and irrigation canals that were critical for public safety and rural livelihoods.

In 2013, KRTI commissioned two evaluations from the research firm M Vector; one of its public infrastructure rehabilitation (parks, electricity networks, government offices, etc.); and one of its irrigation infrastructure rehabilitations. M Vector traveled to communities where KRTI supported infrastructure rehabilitation, as well as communities where KRTI projects did not take place. They evaluated whether KRTI's projects met their intended goals of improving cooperation between local authorities and communities through increased transparency and access to public services, while also bringing different ethnicities together to reduce tension. ***This case study is a summary of the key findings of these two reports edited and prepared by KRTI staff.***

According to the results, infrastructure rehabilitation has had a positive impact on reducing tension, particularly in the south, as it has increased safety and security and improved attitudes towards local authorities. Irrigation infrastructure improvements both addressed tensions and improved livelihoods in the south. On the whole, local populations in KRTI-supported communities are more involved in community activities than non-KRTI supported communities. These projects have also had a minor economic impact, though not as significant as other factors. In the north, including Talas and Maevka, infrastructure projects provided new opportunities for youth, reducing involvement in criminal activities.

The projects have also had a positive impact on ethnic relations in some communities. According to respondents in the south, the rehabilitation of public infrastructure in their communities has helped them move past the events of 2010. The renovation of irrigation infrastructure resulted in a decrease in resource based conflicts, particularly in ethnically diverse regions of the south. In both the north and south, respondents who participated in the infrastructure rehabilitations reported that the projects successfully brought people from different ethnicities together to work for the common good.