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COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL

**MAKHALLA INITIATIVE PROJECT
FOR UZBEKISTAN**

QUARTERLY REPORT

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**The Counterpart Mahalla Initiative Program (MIP)
Second Quarterly Report: January–March 2000**

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I. Executive Summary

During the second quarter, the Program Director and MIP Coordinator held a series of consultations with Counterpart staff, NGOs and mahalla committees at NGO Support Centers in Nukus, Kokand and Bukhara. These visits provided the MIP team with an opportunity to meet with local communities and further understand their needs and problems. The team held joint consultations with NGOs and mahalla committees and began the process of identifying pilot projects. Six pilot projects were identified in the Nukus and Bukhara regions. In February the MIP team organized a meeting with International Donor Organizations to present the program to them and promote potential collaboration.

In January the "start-up" NGO Support Center staff meeting was held in Tashkent and in February an all staff meeting was held in Bukhara. These meetings were instrumental in helping NGO Support Center staff better understand their roles and responsibilities as they relate to the MIP as well as the objectives and operational details of the MIP.

Three Participatory Community Appraisal (PCA) training workshops were held in Nukus, Kokand and Fergana City. Additional PCA research exercises were then conducted with mahalla committees and their communities in all three regions.

A Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop was conducted in Tashkent in early March to identify trainers to conduct trainings in Counterpart modules. Of the 25 attendees, 12 were identified as potential trainers for the MIP and will receive additional training in conducting PRA trainings/exercises. The 12 individuals selected are Uzbek speakers who will help Counterpart address the shortage of trainers available to conduct training workshops in the Uzbek language.

II. Program Goals and Objectives

The goal of the MIP is:

To promote and provide opportunities for grassroots citizen empowerment by strengthening and establishing linkages between NGOs and mahalla committees and catalyze development of social partnership among these stakeholders.

The objectives are:

1. To increase the constituency for NGOs as acknowledged representatives of public opinion and effective partners with local communities in addressing self-defined community needs.
2. To foster the transformation of mahalla committees and other local administrative structures into effective two-way conduits for dialogue between citizens and government.
3. To establish sustainable collaborative linkages between NGOs and mahalla committees in the framework of Social Partnership.

III. Impacts

In the short amount of time that the MIP has been implemented, it has been successful in affecting change in the communities with which it works. These impacts provide NGOs and Mahalla committees with insight into the needs of the communities and constituents with which they work. By coordinating initial meetings and discussions between NGOs, Mahalla committees and communities, the MIP team has been successful in laying a solid foundation for collaboration and joint planning of projects.

As a result of Counterpart training, the mahalla committee *Shirbuddin* learned more about its rights and subsequently obtained its own bank account. As all bank account activity in Uzbekistan is typically controlled by the hokimiat, *Shirbuddin* now affords a higher level of autonomy from the local government.

IV. Activity Highlights

Program Design Refinements

From January to March, the MIP staff conducted field visits to the targeted regions to familiarize themselves with staff from NGO Support Centers in Kokand, Bukhara, and Nukus as well as with mahalla committees and NGOs in the area. Discussions were held with NGO Support Center staff to inform them of MIP's objectives, policies and activities. Visits to mahallas committees were designed to gain a better understanding of their situation and to get a "first hand" look of day-to-day life. Consultations and discussions were held with local NGOs to learn about the types of activities they are currently undertaking, and to inform them about the MIP's objectives, policies and future activities.

The MIP "start-up" meeting was held on January 26th-27th in Tashkent. All NGO Support Center staff and senior staff from the Tashkent office participated in the meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity for MIP staff to review the work done, progress made to-date, and any problems encountered since orientation in December. A review of the structure and function of the Support Centers within the MIP was discussed. The NGO Support Center Coordinator and Mahalla Coordinator for each Support Center were identified and their roles and responsibilities were defined. Training sessions for selected mahallas were discussed, and PRA exercises were planned for Kokand, Nukus, and Bukhara. The monitoring and evaluation framework was reviewed and further developed. The MIP work plan for February and March was prepared.

The first of the three bi-monthly NGO Support Center staff meetings was held February 28th-29th in Bukhara. The grant application form designed for the MIP was further developed and finalized in consultation with Support Center staff.

The formation of the Regional Grant Review Committees (RGRC) was discussed. These RGRC meetings will be held at the NGO Support Centers in each region to review and recommend grant applications to the Grant approval committee based in Tashkent. These committees will have five members, including the Support Center coordinator, Mahalla Coordinator and three outside members from the region. An orientation workshop will be conducted for the RGRC members to help them familiarize themselves with the process and procedures for reviewing and recommending grant applications. The MIP staff in Tashkent will prepare an informational package for the RGRC members.

The database questionnaire was reviewed and finalized with Support Center staff. The NGO Support Center staff will distribute these questionnaires to NGOs that have participated in Counterpart Consortium training programs and makhalla committees. NGO Support Center staff were successful in collecting completed database questionnaires by March 20. For quarter three this information will be compiled into a database for use by mahalla committees and NGOs in the three regions. The database will be refined and updated on an ongoing basis.

The MIP Basic Information booklet was completed in January and was translated into three languages – Uzbek, Russian and English. This promotional tool will help program stakeholders such as NGOs and makhalla committees understand how the MIP can help them with their activities by sharing MIP policies and procedures.

An informational brochure on MIP is being prepared by staff in Tashkent and will also be available in Uzbek, Russian and English. This brochure will serve as a more formal introduction of the MIP for mahalla committees and NGOs who may have heard about the program but need more general information.

An informational package was prepared for the MIP Grant Approval Committee. It contains the Grant Making Guidelines, Grant Making Process and Grant Approval Checklist. This package was used before and during the Grant Approval Committee's deliberations.

The MIP workplan for March and April was prepared, discussed and finalized. The evaluation matrix was developed, reviewed and completed by the MIP staff. It is now at the United States Aid for International Development's (USAID) office in Almaty, Kazakhstan, for review and approval.

Potential pilot projects in Bukhara and Nukus were discussed. The following information on target groups and program activities was shared with program staff.

Nukus

- Public Research Center (Irrigation project for vegetable cultivation)
- Winter Flowers (Resource center for disabled children)
- Association of Handicapped (Skills training and employment)

Bukhara

- Association of Pediatricians (Health and environmental awareness education)
- Business Women's Association (Small loan program)
- Oydin Crisis Center (Counseling and conflict resolution)

Training

In March, 25 people were selected to come to Tashkent to participate in a Training of Trainers seminar. This seminar provided Counterpart Consortium with an opportunity to select trainers to conduct various trainings for NGOs and mahalla committees. Additionally, MIP took advantage of this TOT to identify facilitators for PRA exercises. Of the 25 attendees, 12 were selected to participate in advanced PRA training development. The training in PRA is designed to place specialists in all the regions of Uzbekistan to train NGO and mahalla representatives as facilitators. These facilitators will conduct exercises with the Mahalla Committees and help continue the participatory process of planning and implementing PRA exercises, as well as conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

PRA is a series of methods that allow a community to identify what its problems are. PRA encourages community involvement when discussing key issues and allows for a more honest approach to community development. Different activities are utilized that allow ordinary citizens to voice their opinion as to what direction and what issues apply to their community. The strength of this approach is that it replaces the top-down approach of having an NGO or mahalla committee decide what the community needs. PRA methodology allows the MIP to more effectively identify and link program activities that will meet the identified needs of the community.

The PRAs that have been conducted to date have been successful in introducing this new method of problem identification to mahalla committees and NGOs. PRA training workshops were conducted for NGO staff and mahalla representatives in Nukus, Kokand and Fergana. PRA research exercises with the communities have been conducted in Nukus, Bukhara, Kokand, and Fergana. These PRA trainings signify an expansion of MIP activities in the Fergana Valley as well as the initiation of Phase III of the Counterpart Consortium plan for NGO development.

The PRAs have resulted in a shift in focus from the NGOs to the mahallas. After attending a PRA training exercise, NGO representatives realized that they needed to expand their focus to include mahallas more actively in the implementation planning and decision-making and processes. NGOs are beginning to embrace the notion that community-conceived projects are more worthwhile.

The first PRA workshop was held in Kokand from February 9-11. Participants from Mahalla #21 and the Business Women's Association (BWA) worked together to help the community identify and prioritize the problems it faces. The tools that were introduced include:

- Cause/Effect Analysis;
- Map Making;
- Venn Diagrams/Institutional Analysis;
- Time Lines;
- Circular Budget Charts;
- Matrices;
- Daily Schedules;
- Problem Galleries; and
- Small Discussion Groups.

The BWA prepared a detailed report and drafted an appropriate action plan to address the needs identified by the PRA research. It also scheduled meetings with the Hokimiat to plan future work activities. MIP staff will monitor the future activities of Mahalla #21 and BWA.

The second PRA workshop was held in Nukus from March 9-10. This workshop was conducted by Counterpart contract trainers and provided MIP staff with an opportunity to demonstrate to NGO staff and mahalla/community representatives the theory behind a successful PRA exercise. NGO Support Center staff in Nukus and Murali Mohan, Program Director for the MIP, were present for the training. There were a total of 24 participants at the workshop representing 6 NGOs and 8 mahallas. The contents of the training and the methods introduced include:

- Information Sharing;
- Behavior and Attitudes;
- The Principles and Processes of PRA;
- Time Lines;
- Problem Identification and Prioritization;
- Matrices;
- Causal and Follow-Up Analysis;
- Seasonal Calendars; and
- Circular Budget Charts.

Now that these tools have been presented to representatives of NGOs and Mahalla Committees, they have a better understanding of how PRA methodology can help NGOs and the community identify and define problems and perhaps identify solutions.

The third PRA workshop was held in Fergana from March 23-24. Again, this workshop provided MIP staff with an opportunity to demonstrate to NGO staff and mahalla/community representatives the theory behind a successful PRA exercise. This training was conducted by contract trainers Dilzoda Akhmedova and Mikhail Vishnykov. Bakhodir Umarchanov, Support Center Coordinator, and Murali Mohan, Program Director, were present to observe and help facilitate the training. A total of 18 people representing two NGOs and five mahalla committees attended the session. The tools introduced include:

- Principles and Processes of PRA;
- Behavior and Attitude;
- Mapping;
- Problem Galleries;
- Matrices;
- Time Lines;
- Income and Expenditures;
- Daily Schedules;
- Seasonal Calendars;
- Venn Diagrams/Institutional Analysis; and
- Problem Identification and Prioritization.

A successful PRA exercise was held in Bukhara in February with three mahallas (*Shark Yulduzi*, *Istiklol*, and *Yangi Yor*) and NGO *Association of Pediatricians*. This resulted in the identification of a pilot project for the MIP – Increasing the Medical Awareness of Active Residents of the Mahalla.

Pilot Project Identification

The following Pilot Projects in the Nukus and Bukhara regions were identified through PRA research exercises and further consultations with NGOs and Mahalla Committees.

- Public Research Center and Mahalla #32 (Installation of an Engine and Water Pump)
- The Society of Handicapped People of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Mahalla #15 (Opening a Carpentry Workshop to Teach and Employ the Unemployed Youth of Makanken^{*} #15)
- The Educational and Manufacturing Enterprise of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Mahalla #30 (Program to Train the Residents of Makanken^{*} #30 in the Production of Pastries and Other Food Products)
- The Crisis Center *Oydin* and Mahallas #16 and #2 (To promote the teaching of family conflict to active residents of Bukhara)
- The Association of Pediatricians and Mahallas *Shark Yulduzi* and *Yangi Yor* (Increasing Medical awareness of active Residents of Mahalla)
- Business Women's Association *Tadbirkor Ayol* of Bukhara and Mahallas *Avitsenna*, *Abduhollik Gizhduvoniy*, and *Alisher Navoiy* (Small Loan Program in Mahallas of the Bukhara Region)

* Makanken^{*} is the Karakalpak word for Mahalla.

V. Cooperation, Collaboration, and Leveraging

In February the MIP presented its mission to the international development community in Uzbekistan. Present at the meeting were representatives from Peace Corps, Winrock International, UNDP, Save the Children, Commercial Market Strategies, German Agro Action, USAID, Soros Foundation, and the Conrad Adenauer Fund. In addition to informing participants of the MIP's direction and scope, MIP staff were able to gain a better understanding of the international organizations' current work and future plans with mahallas. MIP staff were successful in increasing the flow of information with international organizations, which will allow for better coordination as activity with mahallas increases.

The MIP team in Tashkent held preliminary meetings with the Conrad Adenauer Fund to discuss the possibility of joint mahalla activities in three regions of Uzbekistan. The Conrad Adenauer Fund has scheduled a series of meetings throughout the year in mahallas of the Bukhara/Romitan, Fergana/Shakimardan, and Nukus/Beruni regions. MIP could conduct special trainings for Conrad Adenauer Fund program participants, or the Fund could organize special workshops on actual mahalla legislation for NGO/mahallas working within the MIP.

MIP staff met with German Agro Action to discuss specific ways they might collaborate with Counterpart. Their work is focused on the agricultural development in the rural areas of Uzbekistan. They would like to use the PRA methodology that has been developed for use in Uzbekistan by Counterpart Consortium to help them better identify the leading issues in villages and better manage their activities.

VI. Lessons Learned

PRA has proven to be an excellent beginning for the MIP. Everyone who has participated in it has gained greater insight into the problems and needs of mahalla communities. PRA has enhanced and organized the collective thinking of the community, resulting in improved problem identification. The mahalla participants gained a sense of empowerment and a new confidence in addressing needs and finding solutions to the problems they face. The NGOs who have participated in PRA training and research exercises realize the importance and usefulness of the participatory process and have an improved understanding of how mahallas work. They have also learned to expand the focus of their programs and to partner with mahallas in order to achieve goals and objectives.