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# **CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT INITIATIVE (CSSI) KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, AND TURKMENISTAN**

**FINAL PROGRAM REPORT  
JULY 1, 2004 – JULY 31, 2006**

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## Executive Summary

From July 2003 to June 2006, Counterpart International implemented the Civil Society Support Initiative (CSSI) in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. CSSI in Turkmenistan was extended by three months, through September 2006, due to funding remaining because of a change in national law that caused a nine-month halt in community action grant awards. The overarching **Goal** for the CSSI was to enable civil society organizations to have an increasingly more active role in promoting the adoption of democratic behaviors and practices in the pursuit of socio-economic development. The program goal was supported by six interrelated objectives within the framework of four main activity components: 1) development of Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs) and CSSC networks, 2) community grant program, 3) institutional support to leading NGOs, and 4) legal assistance to civil society actors. Counterpart-led consortium of implementing partners included the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), the Urban Institute (UI) and Social Impact.

The crowning achievement of Counterpart's CSSI program in **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan** was the establishment and certification of sustainable, respected and professional countrywide Civil Society Support Center Networks with the organizational capacity, policy and procedures to enable direct contracting with USAID and other international donors. In order to achieve success in this primary objective, Counterpart revolutionized the way it had traditionally done organizational development (OD) and capacity building by devising a more comprehensive OD tool – the *Organizational Certification Process* (OCP). OCP was an intense, 12 month process that entailed general trainings, targeted technical assistance, an indicator-intensive checklist, a pre-certification workplan, mid-term and final organizational audits and eventual OCP “graduation”. In addition to participating in the certification process, both associations responded by writing high quality proposals to a Counterpart Request for Applications and assumed full program training, grant management and monitoring activities for CSSI in the summer of 2005. In Kyrgyzstan, USAID has awarded the Association of Civil Society Support Centers (ACSSC) a direct grant to implement a constitutional reform program. The Civil Society Development Association (ARGO) in Kazakhstan is fully operational nine months after the close of CSSI and has a diversified funding base and an active fee-for-service portfolio.

Another major achievement of CSSI in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was significant improvement in our partner organizations' financial sustainability. Again, Counterpart devised an innovative methodology that incorporated a comprehensive package of training and technical assistance along six key areas – Financial Strategic Action Planning, Social Enterprise and Fee-for-Service, Public Private Partnerships, Grant Writing, Membership Development and Traditional Fundraising. During CSSI, 90% of CSSCs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were able to diversify their funding following Counterpart trainings. In addition, ARGO and ACSSC each managed a Social Enterprise loan fund, where member organizations could take a 12-month no-interest loan to start an income generation social enterprise. Sixteen social enterprise loans totaling \$61,000 were made and returned at a rate of 99%, leading to income generating NGO enterprises such as a child care center, sign making, consulting services, an internet café, animal breeding, a micro-credit faculty and a greenhouse to name a few.

Counterpart and the Associations continued supporting the civil society institutional infrastructure by building the capacity and professionalism of individual CSSCs to provide quality, demand-driven services to a variety of clients including local civil society organizations, governments and businesses. Over the life of CSSI, ARGO and their CSSC members provided services to an average of 200 NGOs / CBOs per month and ARGO's 8 members have expanded their networks by a total of 60 NGO members. The ACSSC and their members provided services to an average of 60 NGOs / CBOs per month, reaching out to 2,626 NGOs and CBOs in the regions.

Counterpart also had more than 50 recorded advocacy impacts and a number of legal achievements during CSSI. Counterpart's strategic partner ICNL was successful at deterring at least 11 restrictive laws and provisions and facilitating the adoption of over 11 laws and regulations that benefit NGOs demonstrating that positive NGO law reform is possible even in difficult environments such as Turkmenistan. ICNL also facilitated the formation of numerous joint NGO-government working groups, contributing to maintaining a dialogue and improving relationships and trust between NGOs and the governments. CSSI advocacy work was complemented by a program modification – the two-year Civic Advocacy Support Component (CASC), in which Counterpart upgraded and shared new advocacy trainings and measurement tools. A notable highlight in Kazakhstan occurred in the summer of 2005 when ARGO and ICNL combined to provide technical and organizational support to mobilize 200 NGOs against a repressive NGO law. The law was eventually ruled unconstitutional by the court following numerous written commentaries, public hearings, petitions and letters from NGOs to the government. In

Kyrgyzstan, NGOs also mobilized outside of donor projects by getting heavily involved in a political power change and subsequent presidential election in 2005. Civic activism in Kyrgyzstan is robust, sometimes volatile and has led to increased demand for government accountability while managing to not devolve into violence.

One of CSSI objectives was to increase NGO network development at the national and local levels. At the national level, the ARGO and ACSSC networks emerged as the strongest and most credible, non-partisan civic networks. The associations have each developed distinct identities and corporate culture. To market themselves to potential clients, partners and donors, they have developed marketing and communications strategies, logos, websites and conduct extensive public outreach activities. At the regional and sub-regional level, the individual CSSCs have also worked on strengthening networks and better serving local constituencies. Fifteen local and regional network projects have been implemented by NGOs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to support improved service delivery and advocacy.

Specific program impacts from **Kazakhstan** included:

- ARGO hosted the *Fifth Annual International conference on Projects and Program Evaluation* in Almaty. The conference was launched by the International Program Evaluators Network (IPEN) and co-hosted by the Institute of Development Cooperation, and ARGO. The conference promoted best practices and lessons learned on project impact evaluation of international donor, government, and business social programs and turned out to be a discussion place for evaluation practitioners from CIS, Eastern Europe and United States, with over 160 participants in attendance. ARGO fundraised about \$10,000, and an additional \$2,000 in-kind contribution from Almaty NGOs to set up the event. The IPEN Board of Trustees passed a resolution at the conference to accept ARGO as the sixth member organization of the network.
- Counterpart, and later ARGO, awarded 38 *institutional grants* for a total of \$499,999, which funded basic institutional costs of NGOs in specific sectors, between 2004 and 2005. Follow up evaluation of the institutional grantees conducted in 2006 showed that over 80% of them benefited from the grant program and strengthened their institutional capacity. In addition, they improved their service delivery and were able to attract new clients and volunteers.
- ARGO increased their fee-for-service income from less than \$10,000 in 2005 to more than \$50,000 in 2006 – an increase of 500%. From 2005-2006, they won nine grants from four donors – USAID, UNDP, the U.S. Embassy, and Eurasia Foundation and increased member dues by 20%.
- To advocate for public private partnership opportunities for ARGO network, in May 2006, ARGO in partnership with Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) and the American Chamber of Commerce, organized a forum on *NGO and Business Partnership*. The Forum included about 60 participants representing leading NGOs, businesses, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and KIMEP faculty of Public Administration and MBA departments. Participants drafted a framework for private partnership including principles of partnership between NGO and Businesses, partnership mechanisms, partners' selection criteria and environment for partnership initiative development.
- CSSC members participated in or led 47 advocacy coalitions and recorded 7 national and local government policy or legislative changes.
- ARGO won a government tender to research and write the first ever government-funded Civil Society National Report for Kazakhstan.

Specific program impacts from **Kyrgyzstan** include:

- The ACSSC received a license for its training program from the Ministry of Education that allows the association to conduct training workshops according to national standards. By the end of the program, ACSSC and its members conducted 663 training workshops with the participation of 6,702 NGOs; administrated 244 of grants for \$846,761; and provided 25,457 consultations.
- ACSSC successfully expanded its client base, which now includes international agencies such as the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS), and Save the Children UK. As a result, only 32% of ACSSC trainings were being financed by Counterpart International in 2005, and the rest were paid through fees for services. ACSSC's 2006 budget was \$1,263,114, an increase of 200% from 2005, including 2 grant agreements with USAID, 4 grant agreements with the Soros Foundation, and 1 grant agreement with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy.
- Analysis of over 65 CAG projects showed that advocacy activities implemented in the framework of CAG projects positively affected a total of 850,000 people. There were more than 850,000 direct beneficiaries of CAG projects. The actual contribution of stakeholders, or cost share, was \$68,358.85 (36%). Of the

evaluated projects, 72% showed that the projects results are still sustainable, and 55% showed the improvement of the relationship with local government structures.

- In 2005, the average annual budget for ACSSC members was \$47,090, with 53% of the funding coming from the ACSSC and 47% coming from other sources. More than 80% of CSSCs had 2 sources of funding, and by the end of 2005, 67% of CSSCs had 4 or more funding sources including grants, membership fees, private/public partnerships, donations, and profit from income generating activities or social enterprises.
- ACSSC, ICNL and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic signed an *MOU on Social Contracting*. According to the MOU, a joint working group was created to develop a draft law on Social Contracting, which would provide mechanisms for state funding of NGOs. Nine round tables were conducted by CSSCs, involving over 200 representatives of local NGOs, to disseminate information on the draft law and collect public comments and recommendations. A round table was conducted on June 23 with participation of more than 20 NGO representatives and government officials. As a result, participants approved the draft law of the state social contracting.
- ACSSC has successfully led or supported a number of national level advocacy campaigns. For instance, in July, 2006 ACSSC initiated a successful national level advocacy campaign targeting a statement made by the Minister of Justice threatening to conduct an investigation of all NGOs financed by external donors from abroad. ACSSC quickly mobilized its partners and delivered an appeal, stating that this action was illegal, with more 150 signatures of NGO leaders throughout the country to the President and Prime-Minister. As a result, the statement was repealed.

Unfortunately, **Turkmenistan** does not have as strong of an enabling environment for civil society development as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. That being said, tremendous opportunities are available and real civic and developmental impact has occurred at the grassroots level in Turkmenistan. During CSSI, Counterpart was forced to adjust its strategy to reflect the new challenges of working in Turkmenistan by shifting the focus from NGOs to local level community development and revised CSSI program objectives. The new approach envisioned working with local facilitators and trainers in the implementation of the program, which helped Counterpart to avoid potential tensions with local authorities sensitive to the activity of international organizations.

One of the first initiatives Counterpart assumed was to restructure a civic network that would have greater outreach into the regions and rural communities and be able to provide training, technical assistance and community mobilization facilitation. Counterpart continued to work directly with and build the capacity of the three CSSCs in Ashgabat, Dashoguz and Lebap but also added 6 Resource Centers (RCs) in Ahal, Mary, Dashoguz and Balkan as well as 14 Community Resource Points (CRPs) located in rural communities throughout the country. During CSSI, CSSCs and RCs provided services for 12,891 visitors, conducted 50 Information clubs and 91 discussion clubs, and conducted 203 trainings for 3,387 participants.

The second initiative of CSSI in Turkmenistan was to mobilize communities toward civic activism and development and support them with community action grants (CAGs). Community facilitators mobilized communities, conducted 209 PCAs, and helped communities develop 209 CAPs and write Community Action Grant applications. Counterpart Grant Review Committee approved 140 community projects registered with the SAFI and disbursed US\$ 603,468 for the implementation of 132 community projects that aimed to address priority community needs through partnership with local government and private sector.

A third thrust of the program was to facilitate dialogue in communities through discussion and debate clubs. Program partners conducted 49 discussion clubs for community activists, NGO representatives, and facilitators. The discussions covered a broad range of issues such as establishing and registering professional doctors associations, NGO leadership, Internet access to public activists, community development and future projects, community networking and approaches to social partnership with government bodies.

Specific program impacts from **Turkmenistan** include:

- Counterpart disbursed 30 CSSC/RC Institutional Support Grants amounting to \$349,392. The CSSC and RC activities resulted in mobilizing 209 communities, building the teams of Counterpart's 43 trainers and 111 potential facilitators, providing services for 12,891 visitors, conducting 203 trainings for 3,387 local people and realizing 132 community projects.
- All 23 CSSCs, RCs and CRPs have established client groups that they serve by providing demand-driven services. Through trainings and consultations, clients learn to design projects, conduct PCAs and

develop CAPs, advocate for their interests, identify stakeholders, build social partnerships and resolve conflicts.

- An external assessment of the Community Action Grant program found: 338,000 direct beneficiaries and more than 845,000 indirect beneficiaries; 21% of participating communities increased access to information and improved skills; 14% improved provision of potable and irrigation water; 9% improved health conditions; 6% improved living conditions; and cost share totaled US \$265,252.
- The most important result of CAG grant program is that local people became more responsible for their own civic role and participated in elections for local representative bodies (Gengesh). According to the information provided from the sites, 24 community members were nominated as candidates and 18 of them were elected Gengesh members in Dashoguz, Mary, Lebap, and Ahal provinces of Turkmenistan.
- CSSCs and RCs identified and built the capacity of 64 civil society activists who organized various activities within their communities. The role of local activists is shifting more towards raising the issue and finding ways of bringing stakeholders together to make positive changes.
- CSSCs supported democratic space and discussion of civil society issues through 49 discussion clubs, 6 round table discussions, 4 stakeholder meetings, 21 networking events.

Additional CSSI interventions and innovations included introducing a more sophisticated performance based management system; utilizing *Appreciative Inquiry* - an asset based approach to organizational development and governance; and implementing *Service Improvement Action Plans* (SIAPs) and *Policy Fellows* course – to improve local governance in Kyrgyzstan. Also, during the three years of CSSI operation, Counterpart leveraged both internal and external resources. Counterpart was able to leverage its networks and experience to implement election, water user, land reform and advocacy grant add-on programs. Counterpart also regularly worked with UNDP, OSCE, AED, Winrock, Intrac and numerous other local and international organizations in all three countries.

## Program Goal and Objectives

The overarching **goal** for the Civil Society Support Initiative was to enable civil society organizations to have an increasingly more active role in promoting the adoption of democratic behaviors and practices in the pursuit of socio-economic development. This goal was directly aligned with *USAID/CAR's Strategic Objective 2.1 Strengthened Democratic Culture Among Citizens and Targeted Institutions* - as outlined in USAID's *Assistance Strategy for Central Asia, 2001-2005*. Supporting the development of stronger and more sustainable civic organizations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan through technical assistance, training and direct grants was a natural developmental progression that built upon a decade of USAID support in the region to strengthen democratic cultures among citizens and their institutions.

CSSI placed an emphasis on the establishment and localization of networks of independent, intermediary support organizations, which in turn, serve as the primary vehicle for delivering civil society services. The implementers sought to leave behind strong networks and individual institutions, a democratic legislative framework and models of partnership and cross-sectoral collaboration.

To this end, Counterpart's technical approach centered around the following four main activity components and six interrelated **objectives** in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan:

CSSI Priority Program Areas	Corresponding Counterpart Objectives	Contribution to USAID Results Framework
<b>CSSC and CSSC Network Development</b>	<p><b>Objective 1-</b> To further strengthen and formalize three countrywide CSSC Networks to provide a full range of quality and demand-driven services to local CSOs and have the ability to contract directly with USAID and other international donors.</p> <p><b>Objective 5</b> - To improve cooperation between various CSOs by establishing new and strengthening existing regional and sub-regional inter-organizational linkages.</p>	<p>IR 2.1.1 Stronger and more sustainable civic organizations</p> <p>LLR 2.1.2.4 Improved information dissemination</p>
<b>Community Grants Project</b>	<p><b>Objective 2</b> – To enhance the accountability, transparency, professionalism and public image of CSOs through Community Action Grants, community development initiatives, improved service delivery,</p>	<p>LLR 2.1.1.4 Community based civic action programs expanded/initiated</p> <p>LLR 2.1.1 Improved</p>

	and advocating for the rights and interests of their clients and constituents.	advocacy skills LLR 2.1.1.3 Improved ability to find and represent constituency
<b>Institutional Grants to Leading NGOs</b>	<b>Objective 3</b> - To strengthen the organizational and financial sustainability of leading CSOs, both CSSC Network members and local NGOs, through tailored institutional and capacity development assistance, with an emphasis on self-financing and income-generating activities.	LLR 2.1.1.2 Increased institutional and financial viability of NGOs
<b>Legal Assistance to Civil Society Actors</b>	<b>Objective 4</b> – To develop an enabling environment for civil society in Central Asia by improving the legal framework and providing regular legal advice and services to support CSOs.  <b>Objective 6</b> - To increase the accountability and transparency of local governments and self-governing bodies through issue-based advocacy, social partnership and providing targeted capacity development to local government officials.	LLR 2.1.3.1 Improved legal and regulatory environment for NGOs  IR 2.1.3 Enhanced opportunities for citizen participation in governance LLR 2.1.3.2 Increased NGO and citizen involvement in public affairs LLR 2.1.1 Improved advocacy skills

Due to a distinct operating environment in Turkmenistan, the CSSI objectives for Turkmenistan were as follows:

**Objective 1:** To provide full range of quality and demand-driven services to local civil society organizations.

**Objective 2:** To engage in development activities identified and initiated by local communities in Turkmenistan.

**Objective 3:** To support and strengthen the capacity development of NGOs, CBOs and community activists in initiating and promoting community initiatives which engage the government in a dialogue.

**Objective 4:** To develop an enabling environment for civil society by improving the legal framework and providing regular legal advice and services to support civil society organizations.

## Program Activities and Results

### Program Management Overview

#### Management Structure

As key implementer, Counterpart relied on decentralized management structure comprised of the regional office based in Almaty, Kazakhstan and led by technical expatriate staff, and country offices in three countries staffed by local program management staff. Counterpart International headquarters based in Washington DC provided oversight, and programmatic and financial backstopping support to the regional office, coordinating technical inputs with partner organizations and fielding technical expert consultants on as-needed basis.

To ensure effective and timely capacity building of the network associations, Counterpart designated a *Capacity Development Team* (CDT), comprised of key Counterpart programmatic and technical staff at the regional and country level. Throughout the project, the CDT worked closely with Associations of CSSCs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, providing monitoring of their performance and technical assistance in areas of institutional development, governance, financial management and sustainability, advocacy and others, transferring and localizing Counterpart's capacities within the Associations.

#### Performance Based Management (PBM)

Counterpart's PBM approach during CSSI was based on the following guiding principles: (a) local network ownership over the capacity building process to ensure lasting results; (b) result-based management to improve quality of client services; and (c) co-equal partnership between Counterpart and the country network associations and between the associations and member CSSCs to ensure that these partnerships will last beyond the life of the CSSI project. Counterpart utilized US government PBM resources and hired a US PBM trainer to customize a region wide, 5-day PBM training for 30 Counterpart staff and trainers from the three CSSI countries. Following the training, Counterpart instituted newly learned PBM techniques including revised job descriptions and more focused personnel evaluations, greater focus on impact of each program activity, assisting the associations to infuse PBM techniques into their policies and procedures and performance based bonuses for exceptional employee performance.

### Devolution of CSSI Implementation to the Associations of CSSCs

Counterpart supported the development and registration of formal CSSC networks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where CSSC Networks have been able to officially register as autonomous organizations. In Kazakhstan, the *Civil Society Development Association ARGO* (ARGO) was registered in March of 2004. In Kyrgyzstan, the *Association of Civil Society Support Centers* (ACSSC) registered on October 30, 2002.

According to the CSSI program design, Counterpart was supposed to devolve the implementation of all activities under CSSI objectives to the Network Associations in the final year of the program. Counterpart and the Associations pursued a gradual transition over the life of the project, to ensure the Associations had sufficient absorptive and implementation capacity. At the outset of CSSI, the Associations created *Project Management Units* (PMUs), which were responsible for managing implementation of CSSI activities and later became the executive bodies of the Associations. In fall 2004, Counterpart began building the capacities of the Association PMUs in implementing and managing the CAG program by providing each PMU with intensive training in *Project Development, Grant Management, Financial Management, Reporting, and Monitoring and Evaluation*. Consistent with the POD approach, a set of performance indicators was developed to assess the progress of PMUs in developing their capacities in community project implementation and management. Counterpart assessed the performance of CSSCs and PMUs every six months.

In summer 2005, Counterpart fully devolved the management of the *Community Action Grants* (CAGs) and training programs responsibilities to the Associations. The PMUs developed a process for grant budget allocation, identification, selection and approval of the projects, monitoring and evaluation and follow-up activities, building upon systems already in place. Also, during the summer of 2005, Counterpart devolved the disbursement of *Institutional* and *Network Grants* to PMUs, and Counterpart's regional and country teams were responsible for programmatic management and supervision, financial management, accounting and reporting of the PMUs. Counterpart's regional office conducted a programmatic audit and limited financial audit of the PMU, once a year and quarterly, respectively to assure that all systems and procedures were in place.

Before signing cooperative agreements with them, in May 2005 Counterpart issued a formal RFA packet to the Associations requesting them to submit complete technical and cost proposals outlining the management plan, implementation strategy, activities, key performance and results indicators, and M&E plan. This exercise aimed to help the Associations prepare to respond to future USAID solicitations after the CSSI program has ended operations.

In June 2005, the Associations submitted complete technical and cost proposals, which were evaluated and scored by an internal review committee comprised of Counterpart regional, country and headquarters staff against the following criteria:

- Program strategy and approach – 35%
- Relevance of project goal and objectives to identified problems – 10%
- Management approach – 25%
- Realistic budget- 20%
- Institutional capacity – 10%

Following the review, Counterpart shared the scores and questions/comments with the organizations and requested them to submit revised proposals addressing the identified areas of concern. Following the subsequent submission in July 2005, Counterpart, the Associations and individual CSSCs signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding, which formalized ARGO's and ACSSC's responsibility for coordination and development of CSSC network activity, as well as the implementation of the CSSI program in Kazakhstan for the remaining 2005-2006 period of the CSSI program.

The gradual transition further enhanced the financial and management capabilities of the networks and their member organizations. This in turn created a strong positioning and demand accountability, transparency and professionalism among the CSSC network members.

### CSSI Midterm Evaluation

On March 13 - April 1, 2005, Counterpart and Social Impact conducted an internal midterm evaluation of CSSI, the purpose of which was to improve the performance of CSSI in meeting project objectives during the final phase of project implementation. The evaluation team of 8 people including Social Impact expatriates, Counterpart headquarters, and regional and country M&E staff, developed an evaluation strategy that included a

mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. The evaluation methodology included: review of relevant program documents in each country, individual key informant interviews and focus groups with a range of stakeholders to capture a qualitative sense of the CSSI program, Appreciative Evaluation workshops to ensure stakeholder participation and input, and administration of a formal Client Satisfaction Survey to a sample of CSSC users to rigorously collect data that could be analyzed quantitatively.

The evaluation findings, analysis and practical recommendations were later presented on a country by country basis in the final evaluation report, which was distributed among key users that supported the design and implementation of CSSI. These findings helped Counterpart to identify constraints and opportunities in program implementation and make adjustments accordingly.

#### Regional Civil Society Conference

On November 7-9, 2005, Counterpart organized a conference in Almaty called *Becoming a Learning Organization: Best Practices & Lessons Learned in Civil Society Development*. The conference brought together senior program management and technical staff from Counterpart's regional network and beyond, including staff from Washington headquarters, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Both ARGO and ACSSC attended the conference and made presentations on various topics. ARGO co-hosted the conference and received a practice run opportunity to stage an international level conference.

The purpose of the conference was to stimulate cross-fertilization of best practices and lessons learned in Counterpart's core practice areas - institutional development, community mobilization, advocacy, community foundations and conflict prevention – across the various contexts and programs. Based on participant evaluations and feedback, the conference was a great success. Not only did it showcase Counterpart's and the associations' joint accomplishments in Central Asia, it also allowed for networking and

### **Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Program Activities**

Given that CSSI program objectives in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were identical, the subsequent sections deal with program implementation in these two countries, followed by the Turkmenistan program activities section.

***Objective 1: To further strengthen and formalize Civil Society Support Center Networks to provide a full range of quality and demand-driven services to local Civil Society Organizations and have the ability to contract directly with USAID and other international donors.***

### **CSSC Network Development and Governance**

Over the life of the program, Counterpart built the institutional capacity of eight CSSCs using its participatory Organizational Development (OD) methodology to assess strengths, weaknesses and needs of the CSSCs and delivering training and technical assistance.

#### CSSC Performance Assessment

In July-September 2003, Counterpart conducted a baseline assessment of existing and potential CSSC partners for CSSI program in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan with the view that CSSI partners need to meet the following six objectives:

- to provide demand-driven quality services to a diversified client base
- to be organizationally strong through a democratic governance structure, strong leadership, performance-based management, and a customer-focused approach to service delivery
- to be financially sustainable through a diversified funding base
- to manage a diversified portfolio of grants for USAID and other donors
- to facilitate linkages and partnerships among CSOs and communities and become a focal point for dialogue on the most urgent needs for civil society development and a catalyst for action planning
- to be active, dues-paying member of the CSSC Network Association and part of its democratic governance structure

Based on the assessment results, the Counterpart offices in all three countries determined they would continue working with their existing current network members; Kazakhstan selected one new partner in the west.

#### Network Development

From the start of the program, Counterpart worked closely with the country networks to develop a sound and realistic model of network governance and management through a democratic process considered to be fair and transparent by all stakeholders. In December 8-23, 2003, consultant Christopher Szecsey from the partner

organization Social Impact conducted a regional workshop on *Network Development* to help strengthen the networks of CSSCs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. The consultant conducted 3 country-specific workshops for CSSC staff, and Counterpart country and regional staff. Each country team then collaboratively formulated their strategic priorities for the next 2 years and developed follow-up action plans over the next six months to one year, to sustain the efforts initiated in the workshops.

In addition, the consultant guided the senior project staff in each country through a Training of Trainers process in the design and facilitation of such workshops, with an introduction to *Appreciative Inquiry* - an asset based learning and planning approach. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a highly participatory and motivating approach to problem solving, strategic planning and other organizational development challenges. AI focuses on identifying strengths, assets, and opportunities while fostering team building and partnership for lasting results. This training supported participants in gaining a basic understanding of AI for network and foundation development as well as its potential for other relevant project applications. Furthermore, the Appreciative Inquiry methodology is a useful tool for assessing organizational capacity, activity results and developing strategic plans.

In May 2004, Christopher Czescey conducted another AI-based workshop called the *Development of Good Performing Leadership For Governance* for staff and board members in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Consultant facilitated a discussion among participants on their vision and expectations of the association governing body, which resulted in the development of action plans for further development of the Boards of Directors (BOD).

#### Network Governance

To strengthen their governance, promote financial accountability, and ensure transparency, the Associations revised their organizational structure by establishing three functional units - program management, finance and admin and program development - and established Boards of Directors (BOD) and adopted new policies.

In the case of **ARGO**, the former internal BOD comprised of 8 CSSC directors was replaced in spring 2006 by a new BOD with 5 elected Board members - three representatives from member organizations and two external members representing an environmental NGO consortium and the private sector. ARGO's BOD is complemented by an external advisory committee. The power to approve procedures and policies pertaining to internal activities of ARGO executive staff was delegated to the Executive Director of ARGO. ARGO trained all of its Board Members during network sessions and through individual consultations in strategic action planning, fundraising and public outreach.

In 2004, to ensure organizational transparency and accountability, **ACSSC** established a Coordination Council, made up of managers from nine CSSCs, to function as the internal governing body. At the end of 2004, to sustain public trust, as well as transparency and accountability to stakeholders, the ACSSC transformed its Coordination Council into a Board of Directors. The BOD now consists of 9 people: 5 CSSC managers and 4 representatives of international organizations and business structures. In 2004, the BOD revised and approved the organization's strategic plan and internal policies and procedures. An electronic list serve for ACSSCs' BOD was created to provide BOD members with information and provide an avenue for discussing and making decisions on urgent strategic issues. The governing body of ACSSC is actively involved in the discussion of public outreach, fundraising, and accountability strategies. To make the BOD more effective, ACSSC and BOD members jointly developed a capacity building action plan. In June, 2006 three members of BOD visited Czech Republic leading NGOs to share their expertise on BOD and association development as a result of the capacity building and TA provided by the association.

#### Network Communications

Over time, the Associations have developed distinct identities and corporate culture. To market themselves to potential clients, partners and donors, the Associations developed logos, websites and public outreach strategies that guide the organizations' internal and external communications.

Per its PR Strategy, **ARGO** finalized its website [www.argonet.org](http://www.argonet.org). ARGO published an annual report for the year 2005 in three languages that highlights major impacts of ARGO programs and services as well as the information on the budget, members, and the Board for distribution among donor organization, key businesses, NGOs, and government officials. ARGO's promotional materials include banners, brochures, and promo-samples on CD-disks, of PR-products for each member organization in order to more successfully implement the Association PR Strategy in the regions. In addition, ARGO has compiled PR related documents for its

members such as: PR-strategy developments for NGOs, objectives of PR for civil society, communication programs, cooperation between NGO and Mass Media, other NGOs, and techniques of press-release writing.

**ACSSC** had also developed annual reports for 2004 and 2005, success story booklets, fee for service brochures, and a membership brochure. To promote ACSSC activities and the development of civil society in Kyrgyzstan in general, ACSSC posts information on its website [www.acssc.org.kg](http://www.acssc.org.kg), and regularly issues an electronic information bulletin *Third Sector* which is distributed among CSSCs, various NGOs, mass media, and international organizations via e-mail. The listserve of subscribers currently includes 131 organizations and individuals. ACSSC also registered an analytical publication *Third Sector* in the Ministry of Justice and has already printed two issues that were distributed among its stakeholders.

## **CSSC Network Service Delivery**

### CSSC and Association Services to External Clients

Throughout CSSI, CSSC networks extended and expanded, reaching out to remote rural areas and neglected urban areas where the development of civil society is still nascent. Each network member determined its own core competencies and continued providing demand-driven services to CSOs as well as businesses, local governments, donors and individuals. The CSSCs were assisted in creating operating budgets with specific categories for salaries, benefits, programming, overhead costs and introducing a fee-for-service approach with reasonable client-oriented pricing mechanisms. Standard elements of service provision included: a resource center with computer and internet services, telephone and email communication, information dissemination, trainings, consultations, facilitation of participatory community appraisals and action planning, and legal consultations.

The Associations offer a portfolio of training, technical assistance, research, program management, grant management and evaluation services to their clients.

Over the life of CSSI, **ARGO** and their CSSC members provided services to an average of 200 NGOs / CBOs per month. ARGO conducted two client satisfaction surveys among CSSC beneficiaries in November 2005 and March 2006 to ensure proper program implementation by the CSSCs and ensure maximum client satisfaction by the services provided by the CSSCs. The primary goals of the survey were to establish a baseline for service quality review, and evaluate and revise the ARGO members' service package. Service quality standards were updated within Membership Strategy with an emphasis on services that CSSCs provide to external clients under ARGO branding using Association's tools and methodologies. The results of the survey were analyzed and presented at a board meeting in November 2005. The surveys assessed client satisfaction rate which was averaged at 4.3 with maximum score of 6. Among the most demanded client services were technical assistance (consulting, trainings, internships), access to methodologies (research and analysis, network development, fundraising techniques), access to information (legislature database, business opportunities, potential partners, public policies, organizational development) and partnership facilitation location. The preferred style of rendered services was determined as timely, topical, standardized, adequate, demand-driven, transparent, safe and corresponding to priorities of increased organizational and financial sustainability.

In October 2005, ARGO organized a Regional NGO conference *A Decade after the Democracy Commission Grant Program: where are we on the road to a Civil Society?* The conference was funded under a grant agreement with U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section. The conference was attended by 50 Civil Society leaders from 5 Central Asian republics, and ARGO played the role of a primary facilitator and organizer. The conference goal was to increase the potential and partnership building of NGOs throughout Central Asian Region.

On September 28-30, 2005, ARGO hosted the *Fifth Annual International conference on Projects and Program Evaluation* in Almaty. The conference was launched by the International Program Evaluators Network (IPEN) and co-hosted by the Institute of Development Cooperation, and ARGO. The conference promoted best practices and lessons learned on project impact evaluation of international donor, government, and business social programs and turned out to be a discussion place for evaluation practitioners from CIS, Eastern Europe and United States, with over 160 participants in attendance. ARGO fundraised about \$10,000, and an additional \$2,000 in-kind contribution from Almaty NGOs to set up the event. The IPEN Board of Trustees passed a resolution at the conference to accept ARGO as the sixth member organization of the network. Both conferences raised ARGO's profile, giving them local and international recognition as quality civil society service providers and presented new opportunities for professional development and positioning in Central Asia and the CIS.

**ACSSC** focused on the improvement and expansion of high quality services offered by its members to their constituencies. ACSSC used innovative self-assessment tools developed by Counterpart to ensure a menu of services is based on clients' needs. Annual evaluation of client feedback on services for fee allowed ACSSC to be flexible and meet the changing needs of its clients. The ACSSC received a license for its training program from the Ministry of Education that allows the association to conduct training workshops according to national standards.

Overall, CSSCs provided services to 60 NGOs/CBOs per month, reaching out to 2,626 NGOs and CBOs in the regions. TA included consultations and workshops on Strategic Planning, Financial Sustainability, Organizational Development, and Advocacy issues. Nine CSSCs conducted OD assessments and consultations for at least 45 target NGOs in the framework of ACSSC strategic goals, and provided recommendations on strategic planning, financial sustainability, and service provision. To ensure that CSSC clients were receiving services of high quality, in 2004 ACSSC members developed and adopted quality standards for 9 basic services. By the end of the program, ACSSC and its members conducted 663 training workshops with the participation of 6,702 of NGOs/CBOs; administrated 244 of grants for \$846,761; and provided 25,457 consultations. Taking into consideration its client needs assessment results, in October, 2006, ACSSC expanded its service package by adding such new services as legal consultations and technical assistance through sites visits and trainings that led to the improvement the quality of local self-governing bodies. Expertise in these services was acquired by ACSSC as a result of cooperation with the Urban Institute, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, and the American Bar Association (ABA/CEELI).

As a result of in demand training modules and an increased quality of training services, ACSSC expanded its client base, which now includes international agencies such as the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS), and Save the Children UK. As a result, only 32% of ACSSC trainings were being financed by Counterpart International in 2005, and the rest were paid through fees for services.

#### Association Services to Member CSSCs

Both ARGO and ACSSC provide member services - services to their member CSSCs. Over LOP, the associations have transferred key methodologies and best practices, received from Counterpart, its strategic partners and external organizations, to their CSSC members in the form of trainings, consultations and published manuals. The transfer included, though was not limited to, the following areas:

- Organizational Development (Counterpart)
- Organizational Certification (Counterpart)
- Financial Sustainability methodologies (Counterpart)
- Grant Administration (Counterpart)
- Advocacy (Counterpart)
- Participatory M&E (Counterpart)
- Governance (Counterpart)
- Appreciative Inquiry (Social Impact)
- Service Improvement Action Plan (Urban Institute)
- Policy Fellows (Urban Institute and Urban Economics, Moscow)
- NGO Registration (ICNL)
- NGO Accounting Systems and Taxation

In addition, the associations arranged exchange visits and study tours for their member CSSCs to countries in the FSU, e.g. ACSSC sent five members to the Siberian Center of Civic Initiatives in Novosibirsk to learn about their network development experience and share that experience with the rest of CSSCs. These practices ensured institutionalization of these core practice methodologies within the network and increased the capacity of CSSCs to provide quality services to CSSC clients.

#### **Pre-Certification of Associations for Contracting with USAID**

The key deliverable of this objective was the Associations' ability to contract directly with USAID and other international donors. As there was no readily available roadmap or criteria in place for direct contracting, Counterpart, with USAID buy-in, developed an innovative *Pre-certification* framework to guide the Associations' preparation for USAID pre-award audit.

From March 9 to April 15, 2005 preparations were made to focus capacity building efforts of the Associations of CSSCs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan toward meeting USAID pre-award criteria. Counterpart sent consultant,

and former Program Officer, Stephanie Sullivan to design a viable Pre-certification framework and present it to Counterpart field staff and the Associations.

### Pre-planning

To understand USAID criteria for non-US NGOs looking to contract with the U.S. Government for the first time, Ms. Sullivan reviewed several USAID and U.S. Government documents were reviewed, and identified the following as they key documents for pre-certification preparation:

- ADS 303: Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations.
- 22 CFR 226: Administration of Assistance Awards to US NGOs for USAID.
- ADS 591: Financial Audits of USAID Contractors, Grantees, and host Government Entities.
- OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.

It became clear during the document review that much authority related to contracting with local organizations is delegated to USAID's Mission-level Agreement Officers, who could choose to conduct a desk audit of materials such as financial statements and capacity statements or choose to conduct a full on-site audit, with anywhere from one to half a dozen team members from various offices within the Mission. Counterpart opted to prepare the Associations for an on-site audit with a multi-disciplinary team of Mission personnel participating.

To avoid presenting USAID pre-certification as something outside of the rhetoric Counterpart had been using over the past few years under its Organizational *Development* (OD) support program, the consultant integrated the requirements of pre-certification with our own OD methodology and developed the following framework:

<b>Functional Area</b>	<b>Output (s)</b>	<b>External Resources</b>
<i>Governance and Strategic Management.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO Registration / Board Policies</li> <li>• Strategic Financial Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Law</li> <li>• USAID ADS 591 Appendix A: Recipient Control Environment Assessment Checklist</li> </ul>
<i>Human and Material Resources.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Policies and Procedures Manual (includes Procurement and Property Management)</li> <li>• Personnel Manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Law</li> <li>• USAID ADS E303.5.9.a: Grants and Cooperative Agreements to NGOs</li> <li>• OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles</li> <li>• USAID ADS 591 Appendix A: Recipient Control Environment Assessment Checklist</li> </ul>
<i>Financial Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting Procedures Manual</li> <li>• Grant Management Manual</li> <li>• Financial Management Manual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Law</li> <li>• 22CFR226: Administration of Assistance Awards to US NGOs for USAID</li> <li>• OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles for NGOs</li> <li>• OMB Circular A-110: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and NGOs</li> <li>• ADS 591: Financial Audits of USAID Contractors, Grantees and Host Government Entities</li> </ul>
<i>Financial Sustainability / Membership Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Sustainability Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADS 303: Grants and Cooperative Agreements to NGOs</li> <li>• ADS 591: Financial Audits of USAID Contractors, Grantees and Host Government Entities</li> <li>• Country Law</li> </ul>
<i>External Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Protocol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles for NGOs</li> </ul>
<i>Product / Service Quality Assurance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Management Toolkit (includes M&amp;E plan and program management guidelines)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADS 303: Grants and Cooperative Agreements to NGOs</li> <li>• 22CFR226: Administration of Assistance Awards to US NGOs for USAID</li> <li>• ADS 591: Financial Audits of USAID Contractors, Grantees and Host Government Entities</li> </ul>

### Planning

On April 11-13, 2005 key participants from ARGO and ACSSC, and Counterpart country offices for each country participated in a planning workshop to better understand what USAID pre-certification means as well as how to plan for and internalize systems and protocols that would streamline their day-to-day management while also contributing to pre-certification standards. The format for the workshop was a general presentation of each functional area, the key deliverables under each functional area, identification of any gaps, and determining

roles and responsibilities for each functional area using the *RASCI* management model.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the workshop, each Association had developed action plans with the responsible parties and timeline for completion of activities to prepare them for an initial audit by Counterpart. The steps for developing each deliverable were captured in an electronic strategic *planning tool* developed for USAID, the same tool used for the development of Financial Strategic Action Plans.

#### Post-planning

At the close of the planning workshop, the *Pre-certification Manual* developed as a workshop tool was revised to address topics brought up by Association staff. Key additions included guidance on setting Board policies and standards. The updated manual was distributed to each Association, country offices, the regional office, USAID, Counterpart Washington and other offices as determined by the Regional Finance Director.

As a result of the planning workshop, the CDT was redefined to include the individuals identified in the *RASCI* model under the R-responsible persons and C-consulting resources. This team was responsible for ensuring the Associations are on the path to meeting USAID pre-certification standards. From April to December, 2005, CDT monitored and provided the Associations with key technical assistance and mentoring. In December, both Associations completed their pre-certification plans and received sign off by their BODs in anticipation of a pre-certification audit, scheduled for January 2006.

#### Pre-certification Audit and Certification

In January, 2006, Counterpart conducted *pre-certification audits* of the Associations: ARGO on January 16-18, and ACSSC on January 23-25. The purpose of the audit was to ensure that ARGO and ACSSC: 1) meet minimal programmatic, governance and financial / administration standards to be independent, effective, sustainable, and within the law; and 2) Are in compliance with minimal programmatic, governance and financial standards necessary to be considered for a pre-award survey / audit by USAID or other international donor for the purpose of direct contracting.

Audit teams, comprised of Counterpart regional and country level CDT members were split up into two separate groups, Programmatic and Financial / Human Resources / Grant Administration. These groups reviewed the Associations' *Pre-Certification Strategic Action Plan* and all deliverables by Programmatic and Financial functional areas, and filled out the prepared in advance score sheets. The audit teams examined:

- *Completion* of all necessary policies, procedures and systems.
  - Accurate, current and complete.
  - Adequate supporting documentation
  - Efficient / Effective
- *Understanding* of policies, procedures and systems.
  - Working understanding of the actual policy, procedure or system.
  - Understanding of “why” the policy, procedures or system is in place and is important to the organization.

Following the audit, internal *Pre-Certification Review / Audit Committee Debriefs* for each country took place, where audit teams discussed the status of overall pre-certification for each association and any necessary revisions, problems, concerns, etc. Audit teams prepared a written response for each association for any remaining items that need to be completed before *Certification* could occur.

In February-March 2006, Counterpart met with the Associations and their BODs and presented them with the overall scoring and feedback of the audit teams, based on which the Associations were required to develop follow-up action plans for completion of some of the outstanding critical tasks. By April, the Associations completed these tasks, and the audit teams signed off on them, the audit process was finalized and the results were presented to USAID on May 12, 2006. Both Associations were present and made presentations on the pre-certification process, lessons learned, their individual capacity and sustainability indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> RASCI – Responsible, Authorize, Support, Consult, Inform. Helps organizations understand each person’s role within a given activity and streamlines communications / management oversight.

In May 2006, Counterpart presented ARGO and ACSSC with certificates, certifying that both Associations met maximum programmatic, governance, and financial management standards for direct contracting with USAID and other international donors. Since then, the ACSSC in Kyrgyzstan has been audited by USAID in September 2006, and was awarded a cooperative agreement for the implementation of a constitutional reform project. ARGO has not had an opportunity to be audited and awarded a USAID grant agreement.

**Objective 2: To enhance the accountability, transparency, professionalism and public image of Civil Society Organizations through community action grants, community development initiatives, improved service delivery, and advocating for the rights and interests of their clients and constituents.**

### **Community Action Grants**

The Community Action Grants (CAG) program, successfully implemented previously in all five Central Asian countries, continued to support local level community-driven development. CAG integrated the elements of civic advocacy, public legal education, and local media outreach. The program engaged local NGOs and CBOs in community mobilization activities, designed to empower citizens to identify and protect their rights and interests while promoting social partnership with government and business. Over time, Counterpart transferred to CSSC Networks advocacy skills for them to be able effectively engage local and national level government officials and CSO capacity and legitimacy to represent communities in promoting issue-based dialogue with authorities.

### Participatory Community Action Planning

The various stakeholders were engaged in a participatory and transparent manner through Counterpart's proven and replicable Participatory Community Action Planning (PCAP) methodology. Such broad-based participation in the issue prioritization and action planning process promoted trust between the different sectors, ensured local ownership over project results and the long-term sustainability of community development activities. Once transferred *Appreciative Inquiry* approach, Counterpart incorporated AI into its PCAP methodology. AI represented a major paradigm shift that was received positively by communities and facilitators. Shifting the focus from problem and deficit-oriented view to asset-based approach energized and empowered the communities.

### Grant Management

The CAG program was originally managed by Counterpart, with support from CSSCs. The program was announced through the network of CSSCs, local NGOs and CBOs, local media and government bodies. Each CSSC then formed local grant review committees - represented by different local stakeholders who received orientation on project design, community mobilization, social partnership - to review project applications and to select projects for funding support. A representative from the country network was included to control and assure quality.

After the grant awards were made, CSSCs monitored implementation of CAG projects using Counterpart's participatory monitoring and evaluation approach, evaluated results, and documented impact. The Associations focused on providing technical support (consultations, coaching, and information) to CSSCs and building the capacity of existing CAG grantees to conduct effective advocacy campaigns at the local level. The CSSCs regularly provided consultations in facilitating PCAs, project design, social partnership and advocacy to local NGOs. Project success and results were assessed during the project follow-up evaluation, after 6-9 months of project close-out. Increasing public awareness was achieved through regular promotion of program successes and impacts through local mass media as well as dissemination to communities, international donors and other interested parties.

#### **CAG eligibility and selection criteria:**

- Participatory community appraisal and action planning
- Community development and advocacy needs identified by PCA.
- Feasible and sustainable community projects
- Collaboration with local NGOs to address those needs.
- Level of community and local government contributions.
- Participation and partnership with local businesses.
- Participation of women, youth, and marginalized segments.
- Public education on and protection of rights

In **Kazakhstan**, CSSCs conducted a total of *103 Participatory Community Appraisals (PCAs)* in communities with emphasis on advocacy, following which CSSCs jointly with communities developed a total of *91 Community Action Plans (CAPs)*. Counterpart and ARGO disbursed 59 CAGs, 14 by Counterpart and 45 by ARGO, for the total of \$211,050, including \$37,564 by Counterpart and \$173,486 by ARGO:

	<b># of submitted proposals</b>	<b># of approved proposals</b>	<b>Total grant amount disbursed</b>
Round 1	34	14	\$37,564.12
Round 2	37	14	\$36,061.25
Round 3	34	11	\$30,013.22
Round 4	53	18	\$94,414
Round 5	2	2	\$12,998
<b>Total:</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>\$211,050.59</b>

ARGO provided specialized technical assistance in advocacy, financial sustainability, program quality improvement and impact assessment to CAG grantees. Specifically, ARGO provided TA on monitoring projects to ensure that the goals, performance indicators and result indicators are met to utmost excellence, as well as efficiently meeting them through concrete program activities, anticipating results and coordinating respective activities, and ways to assess the benefit derived from the project by target groups. All 59 CAG grants were regularly monitored and evaluated by through site-visits/interrogations/reports on monitoring and evaluation. All impacts are documented and inputted into the MIS. The Association documented community development impacts, best practices, and lessons learned and distributed them throughout the CSSC networks. ARGO and CSSCs received invaluable experience in grant administration and management of grant programs.

A final evaluation of 36 CAGs demonstrated that 40% of all projects evaluated were sustainable. CAG program empowered communities through building and strengthening self-organization, self-governance skills, advocating for their rights and strengthening links with NGOs. NGOs have demonstrated skills in advocacy, community organizing, and government relations under the structures of the CAG project. Effectiveness of the CAG program is proved by the fact that although the majority of grants were implemented in 2004-2005, the communities continue to derive benefits after the project completions. NGOs and community members gained skills in community mobilization, developing social partnerships with government, business and media and, most importantly, gained practical experience in advocating the rights of the vulnerable groups. Through CAGs, NGOs and communities were able to bring to light community activists, and support their capacities for improving their lives. Broad media coverage of CAG project activities helped to create a better image for NGOs and gain trust of the communities. As a result of successful initiatives, new NGOs were created, while the existing NGOs received a new stimulus for their activities.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, ACSSC network members, in collaboration with local NGOs and CBOs, conducted 85 PCAs and organized community meetings resulted with the development of 77 CAPs addressing priority issues. Counterpart and ACSSC disbursed 84 CAGs for a total of \$140,097:

	<b># of submitted proposals</b>	<b># of approved proposals</b>	<b>Total grant amount disbursed</b>
Round 1	55	16	\$24,640
Round 2	16	7	\$13,711
Round 3	39	20	\$31,362.82
Round 4	65	31	\$50,384.35
Round 5	19	10	\$19,999.62
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>\$140,097.79</b>

CAGs supported areas of empowerment of vulnerable people, legislative reforms on local level, and improved social service delivery were monitored by ACSSC members and staff. ACSSC provided TA for CAG grantees focused on improving the quality and efficiency of CAGs, and improving the grantees' ability to track, measure, and document impacts and lessons learned from CAG activities. To improve CSSCs' skills in advocacy, community mobilization, and government relations, ACSSC managed two workshops for more than 20 CSSC staff, as a result of which CSSC staff obtained new knowledge and skills related to advocacy through the use of a participatory approach.

A new *Advocacy* training module was developed by ACSSC and CSSC program staff. The module was translated into Kyrgyz and distributed to 9 CSSCs in order to conduct and share the knowledge with local NGOs and CBOs. To provide additional support, the *Advocacy Resource Book* was revised and distributed to CSSCs for providing effective consultations on advocacy issues for local NGOs and CBOs. CSSC staff was provided with a special manual on *Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation* for advocacy CAG projects to survey advocacy

impacts from advocacy campaigns on the local level using a participatory approach. ACSSC program staff participated in LGCs meetings and made monitoring visits to CAGs to build the capacity of CSSCs through providing consultations and coaching related to advocacy problem identification, advocacy strategy development, and making relationships with local government.

Since CAG program implementation ACSSC members and staff made over 250 monitoring visits and facilitated 66 close-out and 54 follow-up evaluations. Based on the evaluation results, ACSSC documented and tracked impacts in MIS for CAG projects. Analysis of over 65 CAG projects showed that advocacy activities implemented in the framework of CAG projects positively affected a total of 850,000 people. CAGs showed that community members took ownership of the project outcomes. There were more than 850,000 direct beneficiaries of CAG projects. The actual contribution of stakeholders, or costshare, was \$68,358.85 (36%), while the grant funding received was \$122,354.27 (64%). Of the evaluated projects, 72% showed that the projects results are still sustainable, and 55% showed the improvement of the relationship with local government structures. Also the analysis of follow-up evaluation reports showed that more than 20 of the advocacy problems were solved within the framework of their CAPs.

To measure the impact and quality of the CAG program, ACSSC hired an outside evaluator, Center for Training and Consulting, for an external evaluation. The main focus of the evaluation was not only to identify strengths, weaknesses, achievements and challenges but to produce a series of concrete recommendations that would build ACSSC's capacity to enhance the quality and impact of CAG projects funded in the future. The evaluation focused on 20 CAGs implemented in different regions, and the final report included the main achievements and challenges of CAG program, recommendations for improvement, and case studies. The evaluation concluded that NGOs/CBOs demonstrated improved skills in advocacy, community organizing, government relations and public outreach. Successful results occurred in 70% of CAG programs and in these cases, resolutions reflecting community interests were approved, and local authorities allocated money from their budget to address community problems that were identified by grantees. Confidence and capacity of community members increased because they solved problems within the framework of their community action plan and community members took ownership in the outcomes while gaining knowledge and skills related to advocacy during project implementation.

To better serve the needs of the local NGOs and CBOs, nine CSSCs have formalized volunteer centers, which provide support for local stakeholders. Policies and procedures on working with volunteers are developed in CSSCs. Volunteers' centers provide basic technical assistance (computer, Internet, actions, etc) to local NGOs. Encouraging volunteerism enhances both services and the public image of NGOs.

***Objective 3: To strengthen the organizational and financial sustainability of leading civil society organizations—CSSC network members and local NGOs—through tailored institutional and capacity development assistance, with an emphasis on self-financing, and income-generating activities.***

### **Institutional Support Grant Program**

The ultimate goal of CSSI Institutional Support grant program in CSSI was to assist CSSC networks, CSSCs and other CSOs in becoming organizationally and financially sustainable. Counterpart thoroughly researched and analyzed the country-specific conditions to create a package of training and technical assistance to those groups and organizations that are willing and have the capacity to engage in income-generation activities, including starting a social enterprise, contracting with governments, offering services for a fee, and providing micro-loans to individuals and organizations.

Counterpart revised and enhanced its *Organizational Development* (OD) tool and methodology. Counterpart introduced a *Performance-based Organizational Development* (POD) approach with a focus on strengthening the institutional, organizational, and financial capabilities of CSSC Network members and leading NGOs in the three countries. Grant support to these organizations was accompanied with a package of training and technical assistance services.

### Grant Management

Early in Year 1, Counterpart formed a 3-country Grant Review Committee (GRC) in consultation with USAID and other partners, with two or three representatives nominated from each country in addition to representatives from USAID/CAR, INTRAC, and select organizations that would add value from a sector-specific perspective in the areas of gender, environment, students/youth, and civic rights advocacy.

Counterpart's regional office facilitated quarterly meetings of the GRC, in each of the three countries, to promote regional networking. At each meeting, the GRC selected the focus of the institutional support grant for the coming period, developed selection criteria and a selection process. The GRC also reviewed grant applications from the previous period and made decisions on funding of the projects. The review process included specific recommendations to Counterpart on tailoring packages of training and technical assistance to support the institutional development of leading NGOs. The GRC became a forum for the exchange of ideas and concepts on development of civil society in the region.

The institutional support grant program was initially managed and monitored by the Counterpart regional office with active participation of the CSSC Networks in each country. In early 2005, these responsibilities were devolved to the Associations' PMUs.

In **Kazakhstan**, Counterpart, and later ARGO, awarded 38 institutional grants for a total of \$499,999, which funded basic institutional costs of NGOs in specific sectors, between 2004 and 2005. Follow up evaluation of the institutional grantees conducted in 2006 showed that over 80% of them benefited from the grant program and strengthened their institutional capacity. In addition, they improved their service delivery and were able to attract new clients and volunteers.

Grantee name	Sector	Grant amount
Public Organization of Disabled People "KENES"	Children Youth	\$12,500.00
"Equal to Equal" public organization	Children Youth	\$12,500.20
Young Leaders Association	Children Youth	\$14,994.00
Center for alternative education "Junior Achievement	Children Youth	\$12,984.00
Center for Creative Work of Children and Youth "ISTOK"	Children Youth	\$11,773.90
Public Organization "Youth Center"	Children Youth	\$12,500.00
Center for Mass Media Legal Support	Children Youth	\$12,500.00
Public Organization "Fund of Youth Education Support	Children Youth	\$12,500.00
Public Organization "Organization of Scout Movement in Kazakhstan	Children Youth	\$12,422.00
Public Organization "Association of disabled women "SHYRAK"	Women	\$12,500.00
Federation of Suffered Women " Ekho Poligona"	Women	\$12,500.00
Public organization "Aktobe Women Support Center"	Women	\$12,715.00
Public fund Crisis Center "PODRUGY"	Women	\$14,970.00
Public Organization "Feminist League"	Women	\$11,360.00
Public organization "Women's Support Center"	Women	\$14,940.00
Public Organization "Advocacy of Disabled People"	Social Services	\$12,476.00
Support Center for Deaf People "UMIT"	Social Services	\$12,500.00
Public Organization of disabled people with higher education "NAMYS"	Social Services	\$12,500.00
Union of Legal Entities "Association of "Baspana"	Social Services	\$14,959.00
Public organization "Asiatic Association of Disabled People's Legal Support"	Social Services	\$12,401.60
Public organization "Foundation of Tax Standards Formation"	Social Services	\$14,146.00
Youth Charitable Center against Drug Addiction "FAITH"	Social Services	\$11,998.14
Public Organization "Association of Family Physicians of Kazakhstan"	Health	\$12,500.00
Public Organization "Semipalatinsk Amalgated Association of Family Physicians"	Health	\$12,500.00
Union of Legal Entities "Diabetic Association of Republic of Kazakhstan"	Health	\$14,957.00
Association of Consumptive Patients (TB)	Health	\$13,968.00
PO "Entrepreneurs and Employers' Union of Aktobe Oblast	Business Promotion	\$12,500.00
Union of Legal Entities "Association of agricultural producers "Uigentas-Agro"	Agriculture/Farmers	\$11,870.00

Republican Organization "Union of Kazakhstani farmers"	Agriculture/Farmers	\$14,855.00
Coordination and Information Center for Ecological Education "ECOS"	Ecology	\$12,461.00
Public organization "Ecological Press Center"	Ecology	\$11,500.00
Ecological Center "TAU"	Ecology	\$13,531.00
Public Foundation "Assistance to Prison Reforms in Kazakhstan"	Legal	\$14,996.40
Public organization "Women Legal Center"	Legal	\$14,913.20
Public organization "Legal Initiative"	Legal	\$14,804.00
Public Organization "Ardager"	Elderly/Pensioners	\$12,500.00
Association of public organizations working in the sphere of social and legal protection of pensioners "Pokolenie"	Elderly/Pensioners	\$12,504.00
Youth Media Union of Kazakhstan	Elderly/Pensioners	\$15,000.00
	Total:	<b>\$499,999.44</b>

In **Kyrgyzstan**, in 2005, the ACSSC provided \$95,660 in institutional grant support to *9 leading NGOs*:

Grantee name	Sector	Grant amount
Public Association Leilek Ayalzatu	Gender Issues, Batken Oblast	\$11,129
Legal Clinic Adilet	Human Rights Protection of Refugees and Labor Migration, Bishkek	\$10,779
Public Foundation Human Rights and Democracy Center	Human Rights Protection, Osh Oblast	\$11,699
NGO Union of Unity	Advocacy and Human Rights, Talas Oblast	\$9,869
Public Association FOAT	Labor Migration and Advocacy, Jalal-Abad Oblast	\$10,234
Public Association Peace-Light of Culture	Youth Advocacy, Chui Oblast	\$10,153
Public Association Tendesh	Gender Issues, Naryn Oblast	\$10,639
Public Association Kelechek Dooru	Advocacy and Human Rights, Issyk-Kul Oblast	\$10,689
Public Foundation Center of Women Initiatives Ayalzat	Gender Issues, Talas Oblast	\$10,469
		<b>Total: \$95,660.00</b>

#### Institutional Support to CSSC Networks

Network grants had the primary purpose of strengthening the CSSC Network Association PMUs' ability to administer a countrywide CSSI program and grant program and to strengthen their capacity to: (1) provide demand-driven membership services; (2) represent, protect and advocate civil society's interests in national forums; and (3) create a democratic governance structure, a space where civil society actors can freely dialog, identify and aggregate their interests.

The training program and CAG program as well as CSSC support grants were the first CSSI program components devolved to the CSSC Network Association PMU. Counterpart developed cooperative agreements with the Associations for managing and administering program components. The cooperative agreements had the primary purpose of strengthening the Associations' ability to administer a countrywide CSSI program responsive to members' needs – with full responsibility for managing the institutional support grants to CSSCs and guiding and supervising CSSC administered community action grants. By the end of CSSI in June 2006, both associations were "pre-certified" by Counterpart as wholly independent ISOs for USAID and other international donors. In Kyrgyzstan, since the close of CSSI, USAID has contracted directly with ACSSC to implement a constitutional reform (annual program statement) program. ARGO in Kazakhstan continues to be a sustainable, nationwide ISO with diverse funding and fee-for-service activities.

#### **Financial Sustainability**

Financial sustainability is part of Counterpart's organizational development approach and has been folded into the OCP. To ensure institutional sustainability of the Associations, their individual CSSC members and leading NGOs, Counterpart introduced its innovative financial sustainability methodology that equipped these organizations with a comprehensive understanding and practical tools for financial strategic planning and financial diversification. Counterpart's goal was to help its target organization diversify its funding to a combination of at least 2 sources of funding.

Counterpart's financial sustainability (FS) methodology helps organizations to actively prepare for their operational and financial future through strategic long-term sustainability planning. It ensures that organizations have access to

technologies, methodologies, and technical support that allows them to diversify their financial resources and have the mechanisms and management capacity to sustain their programming and overall mission. The FS methodology is based on the following components:

- Asset Diversification and Financial Strategic Action Planning
- Social Enterprise / Fee for Service
- Grant Writing / Strategic Donor Fundraising
- Traditional Fundraising
- Membership Services
- Public Private Partnership

For each of these areas, Counterpart's Senior Financial Sustainability Advisor developed a training module and conducted TOTs for the Associations and CSSCs. In addition, in 2006 Counterpart transferred to ACSSC Self Financial Diagnostic and Indirect Cost Rate tools.

#### Feasibility Study

In the fourth quarter of 2003, Counterpart conducted a 2.5 week feasibility study to determine the financial sustainability environment for networks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and design customized financial sustainability plans for each country. Counterpart found that the environmental context in Kyrgyzstan was appropriate for introducing an expanded financial sustainability program component – inclusive of social enterprise. The objectives of this financial sustainability feasibility study were to assess:

- The capacity, resources, needs, experience and attitudes of CSSCs and the Associations toward FS
- The operating environment, including: macro economic, legal, banking, business and political climate for FS
- The NGO and civil society sector, programs and resources focused on FS
- Donor resources, programs and attitudes towards FS
- Small business and income generating activities and resources in the region.
- Internal structure, capacity and program design of the FS aspect of the CSSI program (including PMU, POD and CDT).

#### Financial Sustainability Strategic Planning

All CSSCs received training and TA in five FS strategies: Financial Sustainability Planning, Public Private Partnership, Membership Development, Strategic Donor Fundraising, and Fee for Services. Once they were versed in the Financial Sustainability Action Planning (FSAP) tool, ARGO and ACSSC enhanced the network's financial sustainability by transferring FSAP to their CSSC members. The FSAP tool was used jointly with an Asset Leveraging tool to increase opportunities for income generating activities.

In spring 2005, **ARGO** held its annual Strategic Planning session. During the session, ARGO identified four main strategic areas for development:

- Membership Development (not only expansion but qualitative membership development where members are united and driven by professional growth);
- Building Research and Analysis Capacity (in Civil Society Development, Private Public Partnership, etc. on national level);
- Financial Sustainability - diversification, fee-for services, etc.;
- Program Development and Government Partnerships.

ARGO revised its Financial Sustainability Strategic Action Plan and identified the main strategies for the year of 2006 to reach Financial Diversification and developed three core strategies to obtain financial sustainability: 1) donor marketing and strategic fundraising; 2) increasing fee-for-service volume for NGOs and corporations, and 3) developing a new service package to better utilize building and its facilities. Research on strategic financing opportunities between June and September 2006 resulted in organization fundraising plan.

To promote its strategic goals, the ACSSC developed a plan to achieve financial sustainability. This plan defines various finance sources, ensures higher quality standards of program activities, includes strategies to meet donor requirements, and determines activities to improve its financial management and reporting systems. ACSSC hired a Financial Sustainability Coordinator. ACSSC focused special attention on ensuring association members understand the importance of financial diversification and can plan for it. Two workshops on FSAP tool were conducted for nine CSSCs to build their capacity in developing a Financial Strategic Action Plan.

**ACSSC** created the Development Department and hired a Development Manager to enhance ACSSC's financial sustainability. The Development Department integrates new business and financial sustainability / diversification strategies, coordinates marketing, and maintains a database of potential investors (international donors, private businesses and government agencies).

ACSSC also launched efforts in 2005 to strengthen the financial sustainability of NGOs by helping them diversify their financial base into non-traditional areas such as social enterprise / fee for services, public private partnerships, membership, and individual philanthropy. Within the framework of NGO organizational development program, ACSSC trained over 25 NGOs in various sustainability methodologies as well as assisted them in developing asset-based diversification and financial sustainability strategic action plans.

### Diversification of Funding

**ARGO** currently has *four main sources of funding* including: international and local grants, fee for service/ social enterprise income, social contracting with government, and membership fees. Sixteen percent of ARGO's total operating budget comes from non-USAID funding. Below is a summary of 2005-06 successes:

- Over 15 fee for service / social enterprise contracts awarded totaling \$46,248 since January 2005.
- 15% increase in non-grant funds volume since 2004.
- Won nine grants from four donors – USAID, UNDP, the U.S. Embassy, and Eurasia Foundation.
- Membership dues increased by 20% since 2004.
- Acquired over \$34,000 in tangible assets (including office space, investment and equipment).
- Developed and utilized impact-oriented performance and knowledge management systems in all ARGO programs / fee-for-service contracts.
- Developed and implemented 2006 Financial Sustainability Plan.

All 8 of ARGO's member CSSCs have external sources of funding:

- Almaty CSSC – funding from OSCE and Global Ecological Fund / UNDP
- Kostanai CSSC - State Department grant and Global Ecological Fund grant
- Karaganda CSSC – grants from Center for Safe Energy, HIVOS, Soros Foundation and UNDP
- Semey CSSC - World Bank funding
- Atyrau CSSC - funding from Soros Foundation, Public Association PPRS, and social contracting
- Ust-Kamenogorsk CSSC - fee for services to Regional Center for career enhancement of government officials and social contracting.
- Aktobe CSSC - 80% fee-for-services in SMB development, social contracting
- Astana CSSC - fee-for-services- consulting and training for NGOs, discounted office rent from government

**ACSSC** and its network members also successfully diversified their financial base and funding sources. The 2006 financial sustainability successes of ACSSC and its members were as follows:

- Income from fee for service activities increased from \$17,661 in 2004 to \$28,530 in 2005.
- ACSSC designed and implemented 14 projects; 6 of those projects were implemented by its members.
- ACSSC's 2006 budget was \$1,263,114.55, an increase of 200% from 2005, including 2 grant agreements with USAID, 4 grant agreements with the Soros Foundation, and 1 grant agreement with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy.
- Acquired \$42,000 in tangible assets.
- Attracted \$1,150 in membership fees.
- Received \$8,110 in private donations.

In 2005, the average annual budget for ACSSC members was \$47,090, with 53% of the funding coming from the ACSSC and 47% coming from other sources. More than 80% of CSSCs had 2 sources of funding, and by the end of 2005, 67% of CSSCs had 4 or more funding sources including grants, membership fees, private/public partnerships(PPP), donations, and profit from income generating activities or social enterprises:

Name of CSSC	Number of Sources	Funding Types
Karakol CSSC,	5	Grants, income generation, donations, membership fees, PPP
Nookat CSSC,	5	Grants, income generation, donations, membership fees, PPP

Kerben CSSC,	4	Grants, income generation, donations, PPP
Jalal-Abad CSSC	4	Grants, income generation, donations, PPP
Kant CSSC	4	Grants, income generation, donations, PPP
Naryn CSSC	4	Grants, income generation, membership fees, donations
Batken CSSC	3	Grants, income generation, donations
Talas CSSC	3	Grants, income generation, membership fees
Kara Balta CSSC	3	Grants, income generation, membership fees

Analysis of the ACSSC members' development of financial sustainability demonstrated the following trends. Income from fee for service activities increased from \$17,661 in 2004 to \$28,530 in 2005. Since 2004, ACSSC designed and implemented over 14 projects. In 2004, the share of grants in the CSSCs' total budget has decreased 1.5 times in comparison to 2003, due to increased share of other funding sources. In total, since 2004 ACSSC attracted \$1,353,589: as grants \$1,300,813, membership fees \$2,213, and fee for services totaling \$50,083. Since 2003, the share of fee for services increased *eight times*. ACSSC's increased its capacity to provide high quality services.

#### Social Enterprise / Fee for Service

In April 2004, Counterpart organized a *Social Enterprise Study Tour* to Bulgaria for CSSC managers. Participants learned about various models of social enterprises, familiarize with Counterpart Bulgaria' best practices in Social Enterprise (technical assistance tools and methods, criteria of NGO selection to develop SEs, details of loan program, etc.), and visit a number of SEs in Bulgaria.

Counterpart provided technical assistance and managed the social enterprise 0% loan program until July 2006. In August 2006, the technical support and the monitoring of financial sustainability component were transferred to the Associations.

Identification of opportunities for SE development in **Kazakhstan** was done through the field assessment by Counterpart and ARGO staff. The assessment identified the following areas were identified for potential development: services such as consulting, daycare/kinder gardens, laundry/ironing and housekeeping; SME sector and micro-financing; construction and production of construction materials, agriculture and ecotourism.

*Six zero interest loans for a total of \$29,978* were disbursed under the *Social Enterprise Recoverable Loan Program* to CSSCs in support of various social enterprise activities. By the end of program, the repayment rate by loan clients repaid was 99.12%. The SE investments resulted in *5 sustainable social enterprises*:

- NGO Kenes established a child care service, which generates \$895 per month. In the near future, NGO Kenes will double SE's profitability.
- NGO Salauat successfully developed SE to save relic forests of sea-buckthorn and red birth in the Narynkol region. NGO Salauat signed an agreement with a Partner Corporation "Aigerim" to sell processed sea-buckthorn (sea buckthorn drinks, oil, jam, second helping, ointment and shampoo). SE provided NGO not only with additional \$ 7,050 (Israel embassy and Center for International Cooperation MASHAV became strategic buyers of sea-buckthorn and red birch products) but enabled it to contribute to socio-economic situation in the region through organizing forestry study groups under local schools, forming volunteers' pool including 18 persons in Tekes, Sarzhaz and Narynkol villages and opening new work places for local communities.
- NGO Kaztalovka launched services of special events at café, discos, video service, rent of music equipment and opened a bazaar for 20 trade places. Currently, SE services bring in \$1,245 per month. As a result of services, NGO experienced support from community and local government, improved criminal situation in village due to emerge of leisure site.
- CSSC SMEDA developed a SE to increase its organizational capacity and draw in high profile business clients. SMEDA improved its listserv, strategically placed newspaper advertisements and developed a marketing campaign aimed at major banks and micro loan organizations to promote its consulting and training services to large business clients. As a result, SMEDA attracted large business clients, including JSC National Bank, LLP Matrix, LLP Center Telecommunication, and LLP Build Consulting, and was the first one to pay back 100% of its loan to Counterpart.

- NGO Namys developed an advertising studio for business communities. Due to unique equipment, good marketing and higher quality of product performance with reasonable price NGO Namys was able to smoothly intervene in the market of advertisement via decoration stickers for offices, vehicles, light boxes and etc. SE generates \$1,800 per month.

During the first quarter of 2005, ARGO, SMEDA, Kostanay CSSC, Tan and ZUBR introduced *fee for service* for the first time. By the end of the program, ARGO as well as CSSCs successfully provided a number of various services for fee including:

- Training for the association of fishermen Aral Tenezi working in Aralsk
- Study Tour for Afghanistan NGO leaders
- Regional NGO conference under the grant agreement with U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section
- Assessment of local NGO's for Central Asian Sustainable Development Information Network
- Training in Association Development for Kazakhstan Microfinance Association / CAMFA
- OD training and Consultancy for Judicial Assistance Project/USAID
- Training and TA in Strategic Planning for Asian Credit Fund
- Training and TA for NGO ARAL TENEZI (Teambuilding/Conflict management/Internal Communication and Facilitation Skills for Volunteer Team)
- Two trainings for Fishermen Association Board on Internal and External Communication techniques
- Training for Counterpart Turkmenistan on Financial Sustainability Strategies and Social Enterprise concept and practice aimed at CSSCs and partner organizations
- Two-day paid workshop for Kazakhstan Loan Fund in Management issues.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, using Counterpart's FS methodologies, ACSSC offered TA and consulting to CSSCs and leading NGOs, which had the willingness, capacity and financial resources to develop social enterprises. Counterpart conducted an assessment to see if social enterprises were viable and to identify potential business ideas. In addition, Counterpart was responsible for the financial management of the social enterprise 0% loan program, and ACSSC provided technical support through monitoring the financial sustainability component, including 10 disbursed loans.

All loans were paid back greatly exceeding the results indicator of 70% and the money has been transferred to ACSSC for future social enterprise development. In total, Counterpart provided \$31,065 in interest-free loans on a competitive basis to nine organizations to start or expand fee-for-service business projects. Nine 0% loans were finalized and repaid in time. All repayment schedules were followed by the borrowers and repayment rate was 100%.

Loan Recipient	Business	Loan Amount
CSSC Karakol	Internet Cafe	\$ 3,000
CSSC Kerben	Animal Husbandry	\$ 2,999
CSSC Kant	Sugar Beet Production	\$ 3,000
CSSC Jalal-Abad	Internet Cafe	\$ 2,500
CSSC Nookat	Animal Husbandry	\$ 2,965
NGO Center for the Elderly (Balykchy)	Micro-Credit agency	\$ 3,000
NGO ADRA Kyrgyzstan	Greenhouse	\$ 3,000
NGO Sairon	Micro-Credit Agency	\$ 3,000
CSSC Kara-Balta-	Micro Credit Agency	\$ 3,000
NGO ADRA Kyrgyzstan	Dental Clinic	\$ 7,600
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$ 31,065</b>

#### Membership Fees

Counterpart has worked with both networks to develop an effective membership structure for organizational and financial sustainability, and provided training and consulting to the Associations and their boards on membership. Counterpart has reinforced the importance of collecting membership fees as part of the long term financial viability. As a result, both Associations have formalized Membership Policies that outline the code of ethics, membership expansion procedures, different levels of membership, new member performance standards and selection criteria, and membership fees.

**ACSSC** has three types of members, full, associated, and honorary. Full members are independent NGOs that have been operating as NGO Resource Centers for at least the past three years, acknowledge and agree with

the ACSSC Charter and Code of Ethics, are interested in jointly pursuing ACSSC goals and objectives, and are able to contribute to their implementation. Full members enjoy full access to all ACSSC services. Associated members are NGOs, businesses or other legal entities that acknowledge and agree with the ACSSC Charter and Code of Ethics. Associated members have access to ACSSC information and methodologies, and enjoy 20% off all participation fees for ACSSC sponsored seminars and conferences. Honorary members are organizations that significantly contribute to civil society development in the Kyrgyz Republic. Honorary members have access to general ACSSC information and methodology; have the right to participate in the events held by the Board of Directors and the ACSSC, but do not have any decision making authority. Honorary membership is awarded by the ACSSC and is free.

ACSSC does not actively recruit members, but is always looking to add members that acknowledge and openly support the ACSSC Charter and are interested in jointly pursuing and implementing ACSSC goals and objectives. ACSSC activities are based on the principles of voluntary membership and equality of all ACSSC members. If organizations share these beliefs, they are eligible and welcome to apply for ACSSC membership.

In the summer of 2006, the ACSSC General Assembly incorporated the NGO Golden Goal (Osh) as a full member of ACSSC. It was a strategic decision for ACSSC, as the Association did not have a member in Osh city, a key region in Kyrgyzstan.

**ARGO** has open membership of eight members. Its member CSSC (Association of NGO of Kostanai Oblast) has open membership of over 70 member organizations. ARGO differentiates membership types by access to member services, entry requirements, membership fee and levels of authority. ARGO has two types of membership: Full and Associate. Currently ARGO has eight Full members which have demonstrated capacity to improve social conditions and develop civil society over three years period. As Full members, they enjoy complete access to all ARGO services. An Associate member may participate in some events and enjoy access to information and cutting-edge methodologies. ARGO BOD is in the process of considering NGO Bereke's application for joining the Association as a new member.

Over the past three years time, both Associations have increased their membership fees, ARGO by 25%, set at the rate of 15,000 TENGE – approximately USD 115). ACSSC has increased its membership fees by 300%.

#### Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

**ARGO** capitalized on and expanded opportunities to form partnerships with government and private sector players. In October 2005, ARGO participated in a round table with NGOs in Friendship House (Almaty) that was organized by initiative of Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI). As a result, MCI presented cooperation policies with NGOs. ARGO won a public governmental tender to prepare the first Annual National NGO Development Report that was funded by the Ministry of Culture and Information.

In November 2005, ARGO also participated in the conference on *Corporate Social Responsibility: The Model of Kazakhstan* organized by Entrepreneurs Association-Atamiken, UNDP Global Compact, and PERSPEKTIVA Policy Study Foundation. The goal was to analyze information on different perceptions of corporate Social Responsibilities presented during the event (government, international business, and local business, NGOs etc) and to orient ARGO members on a growing market for partnerships with businesses and social programs.

To advocate for financial diversification and PPP opportunities for ARGO network, in May 2006, ARGO in partnership with Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) and the American Chamber of Commerce, organized a forum on *NGO and Business Partnership*. The Forum included about 60 participants representing leading NGOs, businesses, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and KIMEP faculty of Public Administration and MBA departments. ARGO provided a brief analysis of partnership frameworks and distributed it among its members. Participants drafted a framework for private partnership including principles of partnership between NGO and Businesses, partnership mechanisms, partners' selection criteria and environment for partnership initiative development.

ARGO, in coalition with CPI and local cultural-oriented NGOs initiated the idea of Jazz concerts series in the frameworks of both NGO initiatives support and promoting social investment concept among businesses. In this regard, ARGO supports NGOs working in art sector in Kazakhstan and acts as fundraising and management partner for organizing summer concerts of young jazz bands that will be open free of charge to Almaty community. The forum allowed ARGO to establish the framework for a sound dialogue and mutually beneficial partnership between businesses and non-for-profits engaged in community development and social entrepreneurship.

ARGO's CSSC network developed three public private partnerships:

- CSSC Astra successfully led lobbying campaign in Astana to support NGOs in their right to obtain affordable office space from the government. By October 2005, a new partnership between the Department of Internal Affairs and the NGO community was completed. The government by rented out office space to five NGOs at a very low price.
- CSSC Ecocenter recognizing the problem of minimal cooperation between NGOs and the government in Karaganda Oblast took the initiative by using its expertise to build a partnership with the government. CSSC provided training on social partnership to the Department of Internal Policy of the local Akimat. As a result CSSC managed to sign a contract with the Government, which increased Karagandy CSSC's governmental share to at least 4%.
- A local public fund in Karaganda, within CAG program support, developed mutually beneficial partnership with local government (Akimat) and business community (Regional Energy Company, special interests) in resolving the problem of streets lightening through conducting one-year information campaign and holding of seminar entitled "Development and introduction of cooperation model" to government bodies. As a result, organization got funding from local authorities that enabled for lightening 6 streets and several parts of the village (a bridge and local market).

In Kyrgyzstan, **ACSSC** and its members have successfully pursued the following public private partnerships:

- In 2005, Karakol CSSC prolonged the term of their initial Memorandum of Understanding with Kumtor Operating Company signed in 2003 for conducting social-economic programs. For its small grant program Karakol has received KGS 100,000 or approximately \$2,500. On July 22, 2005 an agreement was signed by MCA Kumtor, Public Board, City Council and City Hall on joint implementation of the City Strategic Development Plan through 2010.
- On April 27, 2006, ACSSC, ICNL and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic signed an *MOU on Social Contracting*. According to the MOU, and a joint working group was created to develop a draft law on Social Contracting, which would provide mechanisms for state funding of NGOs. Nine round tables were conducted by CSSCs, involving over 200 representatives of local NGOs, to disseminate information on the draft law and collect public comments and recommendations. A round table was conducted on June 23 with participation of more than 20 NGO representatives and government officials. As a result, participants approved the draft law of the state social contracting. Unfortunately, due to political instability in government the parliament has yet to consider the proposed legislation.

In June, 2006, ACSSC conducted a national *NGO Trade Fair* in order to promote and market civil society by increasing public awareness about NGO activities. Over 60 local NGOs organized booths and presented success stories from implemented projects and the potential direction of future activities. More than 700 citizens attended the fair. All main donor organizations including USAID, EU, UN, and WB attended the fair. In particular, the EU advertised its future grant tenders, passed out fliers, and was actively seeking to help build public private partnerships with the NGOs and participants in attendance. In addition to the fair, two round tables were held with the participation of 72 government, business, and civil society representatives to discuss social contracting and corporate philanthropy. Through the positive dialogue at the NGO Trade Fair and the subsequent round table discussions, ACSSC hopes to increase corporate philanthropy and work with the business leaders who attended the round table discussions to continue to publicize and establish effective public private partnerships leading to more cross-sectoral cooperation.

***Objective 4: To develop an enabling environment for civil society by improving the legal framework and providing regular legal advice and services to support civil society organizations.***

Over the course of the project, Counterpart's partner ICNL worked toward improving the enabling environment for civil society using a *three-pronged approach*: ICNL simultaneously conducted legal reform efforts, provided extensive technical and educational assistance to hundreds of NGOs, and assisted lawyers specializing in NGO law with providing thousands of consultations to NGOs.

During the course of the project, there has been a significant amount of turmoil and upheaval in the political environments in the NIS, including Central Asia. The effects of this were felt in a tightening of restrictions on NGO activities in Kazakhstan. Turkmenistan has remained prohibitive of any independent voluntary activities. Only Kyrgyzstan, following March 2005 events, provided new opportunities for civil society to improve NGO law. In this environment, ICNL was *successful at deterring at least 11 restrictive laws and provisions and facilitating the adoption of over 11 laws and regulations that benefit NGOs* demonstrating that positive NGO law reform is possible even in such difficult environment. Perhaps, most importantly ICNL facilitated the formation of numerous joint NGO-government working groups, contributing to maintaining a dialogue and improving relationships and trust between NGOs and the governments.

ICNL has been providing professional development and ongoing informational and technical support to 19 lawyers (9 in Kazakhstan, 6 in Kyrgyzstan and 4 in Turkmenistan). These lawyers provided *over 6,400 legal consultations to hundreds of NGOs*, helping them to defend themselves from government harassment and more effectively perform their activities. As any violation of the law might potentially result in liquidation of an organization, legal consultations have helped hundreds of NGOs to survive. This cadre of ICNL-trained lawyers has spread their expertise exponentially, creating an even larger network of experienced attorneys throughout the countries. In addition, ICNL has created a sustainable pool of lawyers who will be capable of addressing the ongoing need of NGOs through ten law school courses.

Over the course of the project, ICNL conducted *28 training sessions on NGO law issues benefiting at least fifty lawyers*. In addition, ICNL Network lawyers participated in four regional events, where they collaborated with a global network of lawyers and studied with NGO lawyers in Ukraine, Hungary and other Central Asian Countries. As a result of rigorous training, ICNL enabled seven lawyers in to become renowned experts in NGO law in their countries. These lawyers provide a lasting and well known presence serving NGO lawyers, government officials and others in the CSO community.

In **Kazakhstan**, through the facilitation of participatory drafting efforts and technical assistance initiatives, ICNL contributed to the passage of 7 progressive laws, amendments and decrees and prevented the adoption of or accomplished a significant improvement in at least 8 additional restrictive legislative initiatives.

During the project, four ICNL Network lawyers provided at least 1,700 separate legal consultations to NGOs and other civil society actors through their work in the Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs) in four cities throughout Kazakhstan: Aktobe, Semey, Astana, and Almaty. ICNL lawyers covered a wide range of topics during consultations some of which included: registration requirements and procedures, tax issues, contracts, government regulation, and property issues.

The Network lawyers used their knowledge to conduct legal consultations (described above) and to educate others in their communities. Network lawyers participated in, and often helped organize, numerous seminars, round table discussions, media events and conferences where they were able to raise the profile of NGO law issues and help to educate others in their communities.

#### Creating a Nationwide Network of NGO Lawyers

During the course of the project, ICNL's Network lawyers improved their capacity to assist civil society, benefiting from ICNL's professional development trainings, informational support and other technical assistance.

Over the course of the project, ICNL conducted eleven training sessions in Kazakhstan benefiting at least ten Network lawyers and more than 30 additional legal practitioners. In addition, ICNL Network lawyers participated in four regional events, where they collaborated with a global network of lawyers and studied with NGO lawyers in Ukraine, Hungary and other Central Asian Countries. These training programs helped to spark an interest in NGO law among lawyers and created a larger informal network of lawyers capable of serving the NGO sector.

As a result of rigorous training, ICNL enabled three lawyers in Kazakhstan to become renowned experts in NGO law. These three lawyers are a well known resource for government officials and others in the NGO law community. They regularly assist other lawyers to address complex NGO law issues. Moreover, the expert lawyers are also a trusted resource for government officials seeking feedback on legislative and regulatory initiatives.

### Educating Law Students on NGO Legal Issues

ICNL reached agreements with five universities in Kazakhstan to include a course on NGO law in the law school curriculum. The following institutions made the study of NGO law part of their legal education: Kunayev Humanitarian University, Turan University, Adilet Higher School of Law and Kainar University. In each instance, ICNL staff worked with professors to develop the curriculum and co-teach the course during its first semester. The courses were so successful that all of the schools included the courses in their core curriculum. In addition, ICNL came to an agreement with the Judicial Institute of the State Administration Academy, to assist them in incorporating a series of NGO Law lectures as a sub-course into their main course on civil law for post-graduate students. This course is crucial to educating young lawyers about NGO law, civil society, and basic legal issues faced by NGOs. The law school courses are a sustainable achievement, as they will continue well beyond the life of the project. Each year hundreds of new lawyers will graduate with knowledge of NGO legal issues.

### Making Information on NGO Legal Issues Available Through Publications

ICNL developed the following publications that have been distributed widely either in hard copy or made available in electronic form:

- Analysis of differences between Labor and Civil Contracts
- State/Civil Society Relationship in Kazakhstan: Mechanisms of Cooperation and Support in Russian
- Abstracts of Civil Codes from around the world on non-commercial organizations
- Resource Book on NGO legislation and procedures in Kazakhstan
- Transcript of Almaty 2003 Conference on NGO legislation development
- Transcript of Almaty 2004 Conference on NGO legislation
- Book on Public Councils received from ICNL Ukrainian partner
- CEE and NIS experience in Government/NGO financial cooperation
- State Social Procurement – materials of Astana Conference of November 2002
- Polish Law on PBOs and Volunteers in Russian
- Kazakh language Booklet on “Understanding the Term NGO”
- Resource Book on Legal Governance of Foundations
- ICNL Book on European Experience in NGO/Government Cooperation and Public Councils as a Mechanism of Community Participation in the Work of State Authorities
- Overview of Legislation on Freedom of Association in Central Asia
- Guidelines on NGO Legal Status in Kazakhstan in Russian and Kazakh languages.

### Newsletters on NGO legislation to USAID, Contractors and Local NGOs

ICNL provided regular updates on NGO legislation to local and international NGO's. The issues included: a discussion on the reduction of state registration fees for NGOs in Kazakhstan and an explanatory letter to help support advocacy efforts of NGOs seeking further reduction of these rates; a newsletter about the new statutory reporting requirements for representative offices of foreign NGOs in Kazakhstan and what this entails; a newsletter about a new system for registration of religious groups in Kazakhstan and what these requirements may entail; and a newsletter about the establishment of two new Councils of the Government of Kazakhstan (for NGO Cooperation and for Affairs of Handicapped People).

In **Kyrgyzstan**, ICNL successfully contributed to the passage or amendment of *at least 4 progressive laws* and decrees and prevented the adoption of or accomplished a *significant improvement in at least 3 laws, edicts, or decrees* in Kyrgyzstan.

During the project, six ICNL Network lawyers provided *at least 2,500 separate legal consultations* to NGOs and other civil society actors through their work in the CSSCs in six cities throughout Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek, Naryn, Osh, Karakol, Jalal-Abad and Talas. The issues covered by ICNL's lawyers during consultations included areas such as: registration requirements and procedures, taxation, labor law, property, civil law and social partnership, organizational structure and contracts.

### Creating a Nationwide Network of NGO Lawyers

During the course of the project, ICNL's Network Lawyers continued to improve their capacity to assist civil society, benefiting from ICNL's professional development trainings, informational support and other technical assistance. Over the course of the project, ICNL conducted eight training sessions in Kyrgyzstan benefiting at least six Network lawyers. In addition, ICNL Network lawyers participated in four regional events, where they collaborated with a global network of lawyers and studied with NGO lawyers in Ukraine, Hungary and other

Central Asian Countries. These training programs helped to spark an interest in NGO law among lawyers and created a larger informal network of lawyers capable of serving the NGO sector.

As a result of rigorous training, ICNL enabled three lawyers in Kyrgyzstan to become renowned experts in NGO law. These three lawyers are a well known resource for government officials and others in the NGO law community. They regularly assist other lawyers to address complex NGO law issues. Moreover, the expert lawyers are also a trusted resource for government officials seeking feedback on legislative and regulatory initiatives.

#### Educating Law Students on NGO Legal Issues

ICNL assisted five Kyrgyz universities in creating sustainable courses in NGO law, accompanied by a full textbook. ICNL worked closely with the faculties at each university to develop the curriculum and co-teach courses in their first semesters before turning over full operations to University staff. In particular, ICNL negotiated agreements with the International University of Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University, Kyrgyz National University, the Institute for Purposeful Preparation of Specialists, and the Kyrgyz State Law Academy to introduce the NGO Law Courses into the curriculum.

The textbook covers several different spheres and includes international, as well as local, legal framework issues. To help facilitate development of a substantial text, ICNL staff selected 8 authors from 30 candidates, half of whom have a PhD in a law related sphere. ICNL then met individually with each selected contributor and discussed potential research topics and set a deadline for the submission of their work. In addition, ICNL provided each author with the necessary materials including books, ICNL's workshop materials and reports. ICNL conducted the final editing of all submitted topics for the textbook. The book will be a critical resource for the universities that outlasts the project. The book will also be used as a model for the other two countries where ICNL has been supporting the development and implementation of these courses.

#### Making Information on NGO Legal Issues Available Through Publications

ICNL developed the following publications that have been distributed widely in hard copy:

- *Creation of Non-commercial Organizations in Kyrgyz Republic* – Published in the Russian and Kyrgyz languages, this is one of the few legal manuals published in the native language that proved to be a very useful resource for all citizens, especially for those outside of major cities.
- *Effective NGO Guidance and Management* - ICNL prepared two chapters of this manual devoted to the NGO legal environment in Kyrgyzstan.
- *Public Participation in the Work of State Bodies* - ICNL published a working manual to assist local NGOs and government officials in exploring opportunities of working together to enhance the civil society sector. With the government's official commitment to seeking opportunities of collaboration with NGOs, this manual serves as a tool to facilitate the process.

#### ***Objective 5: To improve cooperation between various Civil Society Organizations by establishing new and strengthening existing regional and sub-regional inter-organizational linkages.***

Throughout CSSI implementation, Counterpart focused on establishing multiple linkages between CSOs, community groups and Associations of CSSCs. Through its CAG program, Counterpart promoted the development of local CSO networks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Counterpart also strengthened existing linkages among CSOs. Moreover, Counterpart facilitated partnership and lesson learning activities between ARGO and ACSSC including joint trainings, election experience exchanges and discussions on the pre-certification process.

To encourage and build regional linkages and partnerships, both ACSSC and ARGO managed a series of exchange visits and hosted a number of study tours for NGOs and government structures from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan in 2004-2005. Association trainers also provided transfer of CSSI community mobilization and advocacy methodologies and experiences through consulting and trainings for CSOs and program staff in Counterpart's Iraq and Afghanistan Civil Society Development programs. Utilizing existing CSSI modules and materials, the trainers adapted and designed new training materials to address the specific needs of NGOs in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the visits and trainer exchanges, local expertise and

lessons learned in *Community Mobilization, Social Partnership, and Organizational Development* were shared with representatives of the visiting CSOs.

The strong civil society foundation of CSSI and the organizational network it assisted played a valuable role in other Counterpart sectoral programs such as Healthy Communities, Water Users Assistance Program, Civic Advocacy Program and Election Programs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Cross program work included utilizing CSSCs for grant management and trainings, hiring the associations for assessments and technical assistance and tapping into information sharing and distribution networks of Counterpart assisted networks.

In early 2005 in **Kazakhstan**, ARGO developed and administered the *Local NGO Network Development Grant Program*, through which each of the 8 CSSCs received funding for their local network development. To build the capacity of their networks, CSSCs provided a number of trainings on Network Development and consultations on networking and consulted network members on establishing dialogue with government members. Within the program, 8 *local networks* were established. Furthermore, their capacity to manage network projects was strengthened, while relations and cooperation between 8 local networks and government improved. All 8 CSSCs implemented their programs in close cooperation with local authorities. Network grant activities included:

- Aktobe CSSC developed and supported a network of 12 regional business-incubators in Aktobe Oblast
- Atyrau CSSC established a local network of 6 NGOs to develop the Public Expert Council as a mechanism of public participation in development and evaluation of the regional ecological programs
- Astana CSSC developed Akmola Oblast NGO network for settling common social problems
- Kostanai CSSC strengthened institutional capacity of a network of 6 disabled NGOs in Kostanai Oblast to promote collaboration and dialog with local authorities
- Ust-Kamenogorsk CSSC supported collaboration among East Kazakhstan Oblast network of 5 NGOs
- Karaganda CSSC built capacity of the Regional Network of 6 Resource Centers in Karaganda Oblast
- Semey CSSC supported a regional network of 7 NGOs to promote NGO services and raise public awareness about civil society
- Almaty CSSC established a strong network of 13 NGOs working with disabled people in Almaty.

All eight CSSCs developed outreach strategies for their network grants and detailed plans for conducting multi-level information campaigns, which resulted in 6 information campaigns including:

- Kostanai CSSC' s public outreach strategy included conducting information campaigns at Oblast level and establishment of Coordination Council on Disability Issues.
- Astana CSSC held its outreach activities through high schools, Higher Education Institutions, mass media for its ecological campaign. Department of Environment protection, Department of Internal Policy and Information Resource Center posted ecological campaign information on the radio and in local newspapers. ASTRA published information brochures to summarize the project results.
- Karaganda Ecocenter, with the regional network of resource centers, launched four round tables with government participation and business circles to communicate public issues and network activities.
- Semey IRIS developed information bulletins (1,000) and 100 maps on network NGOs activities within its public outreach strategy.
- Aktobe SMEDA conducted public outreach through roundtables and information campaigns, cooperation with journalists of leading mass media in the region.
- TAN organized roundtables and seminars to provide information on the establishment of the Public Expert Council and its activities. They invited media and distributed a special package of project documents.
- Ust-Kamenogorsk ZUBR implemented its public outreach strategy at a local (city, village) and at Oblast levels through publishing materials on the project in oblast and local newspapers; promote participation of network members in focus group and public hearing and internet forums, cooperate with the Department of Internal Policy and participate in annual Social Projects Fair of the Department of Internal Policy.
- Almaty Zhalgas used social advertising, billboards and conducted a contest among journalism students on the best coverage of the project topic, held an exhibition and a conference to summarize the project results.

In June 2006, ARGO completed administration of the CSSC network grants and was able to sum up its results, achievements and lessons based on final reports from CSSC network grantees and interviews with all stakeholders.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, ACSSC provided training workshops and consultations on *Network Development*. In 2004, there were two successful community networks developed in Nookat and Talas oblasts: community network in Nookat have submitted and received grants from ACSSC to conduct advocacy campaigns; community network *Jamaat Kelechegy*, in Talas, played one of the key roles in organizing and conducting a community forum in Talas Oblast conducted on April 2-3, 2004. The main topic of this 2-day meeting was social partnership as an effective cooperative tool.

ACSSC's technical assistance ranged from basic network development, public outreach strategies, and network priority planning to more advanced assistance in network public outreach / advocacy campaigning; organizing and managing joint network programming. The training module *Community Networking* was developed and a training request was sent to AED within its *ICI Program* to conduct a *TOT in Networking* among the community leaders and CSSCs with the ultimate goal being to design a strategy on development of community networks. The training took place in Bishkek on May 24-28, 2004.

ACSSC conducted workshops for two Networks: *Membership Development and Volunteerism* for network Bolush and *Advocacy* for network Booruker. Seven grantees received training on *Association and Network Development*. ACSSC provided 5 corporative training workshops: Advocacy, Human rights, Social Partnership and Project Design and for the network We are for Stability, Advocacy and Constituency building and Networking for Network Public dialogue between government and NGOs, and Advocacy for Students Rights. Trainers conducted training workshop on *NGO and Community* for all seven NGO Networks' stakeholders including government structures.

ACSSC facilitated the creation of new networks through developing and announcing a *Network Development Exchange Program*, which focused on establishing linkages and increasing dialogue between CSSCs, communities, and other networks in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other CIS countries. Exchanges exposed newly formed networks to best practices in network development and provided new skills in strengthening and expanding nascent networks. Support was provided to 8 networks for \$14,632.44. In addition to technical assistance and support, ACSSC developed a *Network Development Grant Program* (funded from the CAG grant pool) that provided financial support to networks, both potential and existing, at the oblast and national level. ACSSC administered two types of grants:

- 1) *CSO Regional Internships* — \$14,632.44 for CSSCs and NGOs to develop linkages between their constituents, volunteers and leading NGOs / CBOs from throughout the CIS, to share best practices and lessons learned in advocacy, social partnership, and network development; and
- 2) *Network Development Grants* — \$55,000 to encourage communities, NGOs and CBOs to develop formal networks at the oblast or country level, with a specific focus on solving common issues through utilization of effective advocacy strategies.

A National Grant Review Committee approved 7 project applications submitted by network organizations. In January-February 2005, ACSSC staff conducted initial assessments and continues to provide TA to 7 local networks which received grant support from ACSSC. In January 2006, 7 target networks signed contracts and received grants from ACSSC to implement network projects focused on Advocacy:

- NGO *Bolush* – network of communities from Panfilov and Jaiyl regions
- NGO *Booruker* – network of refugee NGOs aimed to protect rights of refugees
- Network of NGOs of Nookan Rayon – to protect rights of NGO in Nookan rayon
- NGO *Kylym Shamy* – network of NGOs promoting stability in KG
- NGO *KelKel* – Youth NGOs network protecting rights of students
- NGO *Nash dom* – NGO Network protecting rights of condominiums
- NGO *AgeNet* – NGO network protection rights of pensioners.

In February 2006, ACSSC in partnership with Soros Foundation and Allavida initiated a campaign on NGO research. ACSSC organized a competition among design companies for a logo and slogan. Also, ACSSC hired a Research Coordinator who is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the project. ACSSC started to conduct analytical research to learn about the current situation with NGOs, their advantages and challenges and to develop strategies on how to best develop linkages between NGOs and developing Networks. Research results were presented in a one-day conference on January 20<sup>th</sup> that raised awareness of the importance of NGO development in the Kyrgyz Republic and brought academia, civil society practitioners, and

CSSCs together to build linkages and understanding between them, specifically how think tank development can positively effect civil society development.

At least 20 leading NGOs developed and used public outreach strategies, resulting in *10 information campaigns*. ACSSC conducted training on *PR strategy* for leading NGOs and as a result, *9 NGOs* representing two sectors *Advocacy and Labor Migration* improved their knowledge and drafted an action plan on PR-strategy. Public outreach strategies were developed by *7 leading NGOs* (Pokolenie, Booruker Urmat, Sairon, Leylek Ayalzaty, Souz Edineniya, Kelechek Dooru, Center of Human rights and Democracy, Ayalzat) in September – December 2005 as a result of TA of CSSC staff. For example, NGO *Leylek Ayalzaty* conducted an outreach campaign in the framework of Institutional grant received from ACSSC and attracted IOM attention to address the problem of labor migration in the south.

***Objective 6: To increase the accountability and transparency of local governments and self-governing bodies through issue-based advocacy, social partnership and providing targeted capacity development support to local government officials.***

Counterpart built upon its successful experience in promoting social partnership throughout the region and continued to developing the capacity of CSSC Networks and local NGOs to be effective partners to both governments and businesses.

**Kazakhstan** accomplishments included:

- *2 national advocacy campaigns* were initiated and conducted by NGOs including:
  - In August 2005, ARGO helped organize a comprehensive advocacy campaign against draft laws on national security and national and international NGOs, issued in February and April 2005, which significantly limited the role and operation of CSOs in Kazakhstan. The campaign began with a round table meeting in Astana, on May 19, attended by members of the Presidential Administration and Ministry of Justice. Over 200 NGOs signed a Petition and presented it to the Parliament deputies, Minister of Information and Culture, and the Primer-Minister. In addition, ARGO and CSSC *Zhargas* organized a “*fax attack*”, as a result of which 33 members of the Senate were blitzed with faxes from over 100 national NGOs, urging them to reconsider the drafts. As a result of active NGO mobilization and opposition to the draft laws, in August, Constitutional Council agreed with NGOs, that the laws violated the Constitution and should not be adopted. The draft laws were amended, and articles most detrimental to the daily operation and freedoms of NGOs were deleted.
- *47 successful issue-based coalitions* implemented by NGOs on a *local* level. All program grantees have been regularly initiating issue based coalitions on a local level: ASTRA founded 16 coalitions, Zhargas – 3, ZUBR – 10, Ecocenter – 1, IRIS – 5, SMEDA – 2, ANGOKO – 6, and TAN founded 4 coalitions.
- *7 regulations / policy change adopted / considered* by local governments and self governing bodies:
  - CSSC ASTRA lobbied with the Internal Policy Department of Akimat to provide office space in a convenient location for NGOs at a low price in Astana. Outcome of these meetings provided NGOs with offices under criteria negotiated by ASTRA and other leading NGOs. CSSC also provided technical assistance to NGOs applying for office space.
  - CSSC TAN participated in the Atyrau city Maslihat commission lobbying an issue of effective implementation of the state ecologic program. As a result, a Public Council was established to monitor implementation of the state ecological program. This mechanism closer cooperation between the non-profit sector and local authorities. During the following six months, the Public Council has conducted an informational campaign to engage Atyrau’s citizens in the issues related to city construction works and violations of environment protection regulations. The Council circulated information on the regulations and their interpretations through the mass media, including oblast TV, radio channels and the local newspaper Ak-zhaik. The Council organized a round table with municipal authorities, citizens, oblast environment protection agencies, nature-conservative staff of the Prosecutor’s Office, NGOs and mass media to discuss zoning issues and how their relation to sustainable development.

- Karaganda CSSC worked with Legal Education NGO “Mo-NIKA” on the project “Protection of Human Rights and Interest of Drug Addicts.” Rehabilitation patients in the center “ASAR” advocated for defining drug addiction as an illness rather than a crime. The government is considering the proposed policy.
  - CSSC ZUBR enforced Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management to conduct public hearings of the complex ecological program for 2005-2015. As a result, the Department improved ecological program, enhanced its influence on the territory and engaged CSOs in the monitoring of its implementation.
  - EcoCenter and its partners, the regional network of 6 resource centers of Karaganda oblast, conducted two successful advocacy and lobbying campaigns: 1) Establishment of a Rehabilitation Department and Coordination Council to solve social problems of ex-drug addicts; 2) Establishment of a Rehabilitation Center for people with locomotor system disabilities.
  - CSSC TAN and its local network partners conducted advocacy campaigns to draw attention of local authorities, city deputies, the Oblast Maslihat, the Akim of Atyrau, as well as prominent members of the business community. In February 2006, the campaign reached success when the Oblast Maslihat formally agreed to improve children’s playgrounds through the 2007 city budget for construction facilities.
  - CSSC ANGOKO conducted a round table “Establishment of public experts group aimed to discuss the respective provision. The main purpose of public experts group is to improve cooperation between NGOs and government department in order to involve NGOs into development of needs-driven projects and programs. As a result of the led advocacy campaign, the provision was amended and improved, and it was decided to establish the public expert group under the Mazhilis. Due to public experts group, every taxpayer will be sure that budget allocation is conducted with community participation.
- 3 *government entities* established mechanisms for policy dialogue with citizens and NGOs:
    - As a result of a round table conducted by EcoCenter’s network member-organization NGO Karkaly in Karkaralinsk, a *Civic Committee*, consisting of representatives of executive power, deputies and NGO leaders, was established. Civic Committee members developed a work plan and defined functions of the Committee in the field of urban and economic development in the city.
    - Per CSSC EcoCenter’s initiative, the Ministry of Environment established a *Public Ecological Council* to develop suggestions and recommendations concerning implementation of the state program in the sphere of environment protection. According to the Council’s regulation, the member of the Council can be a scientist, deputy, NGO or head of ecological services of the major industrious companies of Atyrau. EcoCenter became a member of this committee.
    - ASTRA obtained new forms of cooperation with the local government in Astana. Before cooperation between NGO Luch Nadezhdy, an ASTRA member, and Kokshetau Penitentiary Department only included consulting on prisoner health issues. As a result of the network grant project, NGO Luch Nadezhdy signed a contract with the Kokshetau Penitentiary Department to involve prisoners in environmental clean up and public work activities as a form of rehabilitation.
    - CSSC ZUBR and the Department of Natural Resources and Regulation of Environmental Management co-hosted a round table “Protection of Water Bodies”, devoted to the issue of pollution of basins and recreation sites of East Kazakhstan Oblast. The round-table gathered representatives of the state structures, business communities and NGOs. ZUBR proposed to engage more NGOs, including those in the oblast regions, into solution of ecological problems, which is now being considered. The Environmental Department agreed to regularly participate in future roundtables.

- IRIS participated in the regional conference “The State as a Social Contractor: Problems and Perspectives” aimed to provide opportunities for discussion of the main directions of effective realization of the state social contracting mechanism in East-Kazakhstan Oblast. The conference gathered leading NGOs of the Semey region, director and specialists of the Department of Internal Politics of East Kazakhstan Oblast, the senior specialists of Semey Akimat, head of Tax Committee of Semey, deputies of the city maslikhat and mass media. As a result of this conference, participants decided to formulate suggestions on improvement of the state social contracting mechanism. These suggestions were developed by local NGOs at the local level, demonstrated during the conference, and addressed to the director of the Department of Internal Politics for consideration.

ARGO and Counterpart representatives participated in the Kazakh government and UNDP-sponsored Civic Forums in 2005 and 2006. The purpose of the Civic Forum is to coordinate activities and share information between CSOs and government officials in a formal setting on an annual basis. The Association’s Executive Director, Association Board Member, Director of EcoCenter CSSC (Karaganda), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, facilitated a working group on NGO and Business cooperation. As a result, ARGO was invited to take part in Almaty Council’s activities that unite Almaty Entrepreneurs Associations and NGOs for promoting social responsibility of business and drafting joint projects. ARGO facilitated presentation preparation for the Republican Seminar on Social Partnership Development. ARGO member organizations presented their recommendations on implementing Social Contracting concept by Kazakh Government.

In 2005, ARGO conducted a nationwide assessment of the civil society sector in Kazakhstan that enabled to identify numerous spheres, issues and challenges that Kazakh NGOs and civil society practitioners face, as well as their relationships with the media, government and corporate sectors. Eighty-five out of the 167 leading NGOs were surveyed. This research, and its findings, allowed ARGO to create a comprehensive development framework for the Kazakhstani civil society sector, including the identification of critical areas in technical capacity building for each priority civil society sector; and the identification of growth sectors and partners where civil society has yet to reach its full potential. Based on the research, ARGO developed and published an analytical report of the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kazakhstan to work with government.

**Kyrgyzstan** accomplishments included:

- *4 national advocacy campaigns* were initiated and conducted by NGOs, including:
  - In July, 2006 ACSSC initiated a successful national level advocacy campaign targeting a statement made by the Minister of Justice threatening to conduct an investigation of all NGOs financed by external donors from abroad. ACSSC quickly mobilized its partners and delivered an appeal, stating that this action was illegal, with more 150 signatures of NGO leaders throughout the country to the President and Prime-Minister. As a result, the statement was repealed.
  - In March, 2006 ACSSC initiated another advocacy campaign oppose an initiative of the Ombudsman of KR threatening to limit the rights of NGOs and citizens on freedom of association and self-expression. ACSSC delivered the appeal signed by more then 150 regional NGOs to the President and Deputies of the parliament. The Ombudsmen later retracted his statement.
- *18 issue-based coalitions/advocacy campaigns* were initiated by NGOs on the local level including:
  - As a result of Jalal-Abad Oblast Internet Araly NGO’s advocacy campaign aimed at increasing the transparency of local governing bodies in land resource distribution, public hearings were conducted, a legal consultative center in Aral village was established, and the NGO initiated meetings with villagers that led to a list of rules and regulations that were approved by the village council. To date, the local government follows the regulations.
  - As a result of Ak otok naiman” CBO’s advocacy campaign focused on conducting budget hearings in the village to include a new item of expenses - for mudflow protection, into the local budget- the village council approved a decree on conducting budget hearings and provided money for mudflow protection.
  - CBO Dostuk conducted a round table discussing the problem of fourteen (14) families living in dangerous mountain areas influenced by water flow and as a result, he Rayon Department of the

Ministry of Emergency made a decision on providing money from the local budget for preventing water flow in the area leading to a decree on providing land for fourteen (14) vulnerable families.

- As a result of Nurbu Choky Tash's PCA session that revealed a shortage of irrigation water and a subsequent training in Advocacy and Budget Hearings for villagers and local organizations, the local administration allocated a sum equivalent to 1,500 US Dollars for the repair of the irrigation system.
- The villages of Ak-Bashat, Aral and Aidarbek of Jayil Rayon have 2,342 people, and had only one bus with 19 seats available to go to Kara-Balta and back. As a result of NGO Ak Dakan sending a letter to the transport department of Jayl Rayon and the Karabalta Town Administration, the appeal was considered, supported, and shortly thereafter a bus with 36 seats was provided to serve those villages.
- CSSC Karabalta provides informational assistance, technical assistance (transportation, copying, printing, fax stc.), training, and consultation for NGOs *Sozvezdie*, *El Uchun*, *Chui Murgab* and *Murzabiy*, who work with Tajik refugees trying to obtain citizenship in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, 1,031 refugees of Panfilov, Jayl and Moscow Raions of Chui Oblast have obtained citizenship through collaboration with the CSSC, UNHCR, and passport departments.
- *4 regulations/policy changes* were adopted/considered by local governments and self governing bodies including:
  - As a result of SIAP activities initiated as a pilot in Karakol, the Mayor Department approved the establishment of the sanitary police.
  - In Nookat, local police staff for ensuring public order was established with the approval of the Nookat Mayor Department.
  - The Jalal-Abad CSSC conducted PCA exercises during which the greatest problem was the need for additional transportation routes. As a result of the community's efforts route #15 was opened and a resolution on route openings was made by the Agency of City Transportation. The successful realization of this advocacy campaign benefited the people of this town as well as created a bridge between *Sputnik* and *Kugart* districts
  - The members of NGO Utor-Alan developed a project entitled "Legal assistance to rural populations" aimed at improving services of the Rayon Register Department in terms of providing of necessary legal documents on land plots and increasing information delivery and legal literacy in terms of land law, and social benefits among village people through the conducting of training and seminars. After seminars, peoples' awareness about the Land Code increased, villagers became aware of ownership rights, and existing social benefits, and are able to defend their land rights. Furthermore, more than 100 village people have received necessary legal documents ensuring their ownership rights on land.
- *5 government entities* established mechanisms for policy dialogue with citizens and NGOs:
  - Karakol and Nookat City Mayor Departments participated in round tables targeting SIAP implementation and signed agreements including a memorandum of understanding mandating cooperation and joint implementation of activities between NGOs and the government during the implementation of the government's service improvement plan. The memorandum of understanding was the mechanism created to improve and expand the existing NGO government dialogue.
  - Pensioners' initiative group "Nadejda" conducted a round table with the participation of different stakeholders from legislative assemblies at the rayon and national level focusing on the reduction of public transportation fees for pensioners. The discussion resulted in a decree issued by local authorities to reduce the fee to 3 soms for pensioners and this decree was in itself a mechanism to ensure that pensioners would pay a fair price and encourage further dialogue in the future.
  - Association «Collaboration-Sodrujestvo» of Naryn Oblast aimed to protect children's rights through influencing governmental structures to enforce the Law of KR №111 "About nutrition for schoolchildren in KR between 1-4 grades. As a result, Jogorku Kenesh deputies developed a resolution about providing snacks to increase nutrition for 1-4 grade schoolchildren from mountainous regions in 2006

and in 2007 for all schools throughout KR. This mechanism, the law, is expected to improve the lives of 432,088 children throughout KR. Starting April 2006, the provision of breakfasts for children started in schools in Naryn Oblast, and the local budget provides 5 soms per child.

On March 23, 2005, ACSSC staff participated in the mass-meeting *We Want to Know Truth* held in Bishkek. Organized by several prominent NGOs, the meeting aimed to push the national government to publicize information about events in Kochkor Rayon<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, the rally was broken up by the police. ACSSC prepared an appeal with protests against the unconstitutional actions of the national government and immediately published it on March 23 through Aki-Press. On March 30, ACSSC prepared an appeal to conduct an open and public investigation of documents found in the President's Office. ACSSC coordinated efforts between leading NGOs to initiate an impeachment of President Akaev in case his corruption was confirmed.

The events of March 24, 2005<sup>3</sup> in the country created friendly conditions for civil society to build a real partnership with the government. The *National Civil Society Forum* was held on April 19-20 in Bishkek to discuss the situation in Kyrgyzstan after March 24, 2005, identify ways to consolidate civil society and ensure and revitalize the democratic process, which was opposed by Akaev's regime. The ACSSC was among 9 NGOs who initiated and conducted the Forum. More than 350 representatives of civil society, the Prime-Minister, the Acting President Mr. Bakiev, Speaker of Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) Mr. Tekebaev and other high level officials attended the Forum. The recommendations developed by civil society representatives to governments and parliament were articulated. The participants stressed that in most cases governments used a top-down approach for solving social problems and that state social programs have no clear mechanisms for implementation. It became evident that the importance of developing functional NGO networks increased after the change of power in Kyrgyzstan, as they lay a basis for a social movement for democracy and democratization.

In addition to national level advocacy impacts, ACSSC was able to generate impacts at the local level with support from the Urban Institute, which helped train CSSC network personnel in a range of social partnership concepts and local governance tools to facilitate effective cooperation between NGOs and local governments in various forms. The aim was to develop capacity within the CSSC network to transfer relevant skills and knowledge to the larger universe of CBOs, and to help replicate and disseminate successful examples of the application of these concepts in practice. UI's tools were integrated into Counterpart's community mobilization methodologies with an eye to enhancing the quality of the community mobilization grant activity described above. Under this objective, UI carried out the following program activities in Kyrgyzstan:

#### Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs)

UI worked with CSSCs to support several communities in implementing the Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs), which use performance management to improve services and helps make a more efficient use of local governments' limited resources by taking into account citizen priorities and focusing on achieving real results.

In March 2004, UI conducted two 2-day workshops for CSSC staff, introducing participants to the basic concepts, tools, and practices of performance management and helping them develop individual action plans with outcomes, deadlines and responsibilities for each task. In October-November 2004, UI monitored the progress of the CSSCs' efforts in implementing the SIAP through site visits and provided one-on-one technical assistance to the working groups. UI conducted two 2-day training seminars designed to be both a refresher course and a follow-on seminar, building upon what the participants had learned during the workshop in March 2004. A second follow-up trip by the UI team in March 2005 combined focused training and on-site technical assistance to a select group of working groups that had demonstrated particular willingness and commitment to continue the SIAP work. This trip focused on narrowing

<b>SIAP steps</b>
1. Formation of a broad-based working group comprised of representatives from civil society, business, local self government, and the public-at-large
2. Conducting a situational analysis of the issue at hand
3. Identification of outcomes and performance indicators
4. Collection of data
5. Establishment of baseline indicators and targets
6. Creation of an action plan involving citizens
7. Monitoring of results

<sup>2</sup> On March 17, 2002, police forces opened fire at a peaceful demonstration in support of a popular jailed activist Beknazarov, as a result of which several people lost their lives. The government failed to bring to justice those responsible for the massacre.

<sup>3</sup> The infamous Tulip revolution that to the regime change in Kyrgyzstan.

the topics for service improvement and honing skills of the working groups on SIAP development and community engagement.

Using the SIAP methodology, the ACSSC network has increased the accountability and transparency of local governments and self-governing bodies through issue-based advocacy, social partnership and by providing targeted capacity development support to local government officials. As a result, 5 CSSCs (Kerben, Jalal Abad, Karakol, Nookat and Batken) have established regular dialogue between local NGOs, citizens and local government as a part of SIAP. CSSCs and five established working groups (implemented in five pilot villages) consisting of representatives of local NGOs, communities and local government, have conducted surveys to assess communities' satisfaction with local governments' services. Out of approximately 1,500 polled respondents, 93% noted that "local governments' services had improved" and "current services somewhat met their needs". To build the capacity of working groups and local facilitators of Southern CSSCs, an additional workshop on Clients Survey was conducted in November 2005.

#### Local Governance Tools

UI trained CSSC personnel in Kyrgyzstan in data collection tools such as customer surveys and trained observer ratings to obtain citizen feedback and information on service ratings that would help improve the provision of public services by the government. Building upon the introduction of methods and techniques for collecting information from the community and local government to inform the SIAP, UI conducted a 4-day training seminar in September 2005 on *Data Collection Techniques* for CSSC representatives working on developing SIAPs. The seminar incorporated relevant practical examples and case studies drawn from countries in the region. The training covered Trained Observers Ratings (TOR) and customer survey as alternative data collection tools for developing baseline measures (indicators) and monitoring SIAP implementation.

During a follow-on trip in April-May 2006, UI monitored how data collection tools were being used by the working groups in the service improvement process in pilot communities, evaluated the results, and provided recommendations on further steps in the SIAP process. Discussions focused on the impact of the SIAP process on local service improvement in pilot communities.

#### Policy Fellows

The Policy Fellows course (see course content in box below), developed by UI and the Institute for Urban Economics (IUE) and successfully taught in several countries in Southeastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, is designed to provide government officials and CSO representatives with an opportunity to strengthen their policy-making and program development skills, and improve local decision-making by providing skills and by strengthening working relationships between CSOs and government bodies.

#### **Policy Fellows Course Outline**

##### ***Workshop 1: Critical Thinking about Public Programs and Subsidies***

- Types of policy actions – focusing primarily on targeting and subsidies
- Stakeholder analysis -evaluating the interests/influence of different parties
- Policy Analysis Model – a 6 step process for analytical decision-making

##### ***Workshop 2: Efficient Public Programs***

- The roles and responsibilities of different levels of government
- Models for carrying out government functions: direct provision, contracting out, and divestiture/privatization
- Designing contracting out for a concrete municipal service

##### ***Workshop 3: Program Monitoring and Evaluation***

- Program monitoring – what to track, why, how?
- Program evaluation – assessing the implementation and/or outcomes
- Using data effectively

##### ***Workshop 4: Preparing Policy Recommendations***

- Writing and presenting policy recommendations

The course was offered three times—once by the implementing team from UI/Washington and IUE, and twice by the newly trained Kyrgyz trainers. First, UI/IUE conducted the course for approximately 20 students identified by Counterpart as potential teachers as well as others from the CSO and government communities. UI/IUE identified 7 potential teachers for the next round from among the best performers in the course. Then, UI/IUE team spent a week with the 5 teachers who decided to continue with the program, helping them further master the materials, providing greater depth of information and more examples and working with them through teaching "dry runs."

The course was then taught mostly by the new teachers to a new group of about 20 students, with one UI/IUE trainer in attendance. One UI/IUE staff returned to monitor another offering of the course by the local teachers to maintain quality control.

In addition to the Policy Fellows course, UI/IUE also helped the Association of CSSCs to conduct a ToT in May to October 2005. During the training, participants were taught how to conduct a training course on the development of socio-economic policy and two training courses on socio-economic policy analysis. There were 51 *participants*, representing both CSOs and local governments (LGs). The topics of the course were new and the skills on efficient public policy analysis were vital for LG and CSO representatives.

It was also planned to establish a local trainer's team that would work with CSSCs and NGOs to develop a *Policy Fellows Informal Network* that would serve as the basis for a formal think tank. Unfortunately, the activity was not implemented fully, as there was lack of interest by the trainer team.

## **Turkmenistan Program Activities**

Following the adoption of the new Social Organization Law in the country in October 2003, Counterpart Turkmenistan had temporarily suspended its grant programs and most of its training program. The adoption of the law had brought *organized* civil society in Turkmenistan to a screeching halt. The law required that all existing NGOs go through a re-registration process, declared activity by informal groups illegal, and established radical sanctions for unregistered activities. Thus, Counterpart which previously closely worked with NGOs and Initiative Groups lost nearly its entire constituency. The new registration procedures were murky and expensive. The Government of Turkmenistan policy strictly required that all grants and assistance be officially registered with the State Agency for Foreign Investment (SAFI). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs insisted that all Counterpart activities be "submitted" in advance for "distribution" to local authorities through the MFA.

In March 2004, Country Advisor Gavin Helf conducted an assessment of the external environment in the country based on meetings and discussions with Counterpart staff, beneficiaries, and partners and donors. The analysis came out with the reality based and goal oriented draft long term strategy for the community development activities in the country. Subsequently, Counterpart adjusted its strategy to reflect the new challenges of working with CSOs in Turkmenistan by shifting the focus from NGOs to local level community development and revised CSSI program objectives. The new approach envisioned working with local facilitators and trainers in the implementation of the program, which helped Counterpart to avoid potential tensions with local authorities sensitive to the activity of international organizations. At the same time, Counterpart and ICNL would continue providing organizations interested in registering with technical assistance and grant support.

***Objective 1: To provide full range of quality and demand-driven services to local civil society organizations.***

## **CSSC Network Development**

### CSSC Network Expansion

In Turkmenistan, due to the restrictive laws surrounding registration of NGOs, the CSSCs are not able to register as independent organizations and therefore remain as branches of Counterpart. Over LOP, Counterpart worked on the expansion of its original network of branch CSSCs and Resource Centers (RCs). Following competitive selection of potential partners, contracts were signed with existing three CSSCs and 6 new Resource Centers:

- Ashgabat CSSC
- Dashoguz CSSC
- Lebap CSSC
- Diller Dunyasi RC (Turkmenbashi city, Balkan province)
- Goldav Resource Center (Yangala village, Geoktepe region, Ahal province)
- Hemayat RC (Mary)
- Merv RC (Mary)
- Ilkinjiler RC (Bairamali town, Mary province)
- Daikhan Goldavy RC (Dashoguz province).

After signing three CSSCs and one RC in Balkan province (Diller Dunyasi RC) in 2004, Mary province was the only region left without a coordinating Counterpart partner (CSSC or RC). The strategy of Mary NGO mapping was prepared to identify potential partners and to assess the context and opportunity to work in the Mary province. The NGO mapping of Mary province was composed of two stages: 1) information and data collection and 2) analysis and reporting, further site visits and recommendation for the CSSI implementation in Mary. The NGO mapping in Mary province revealed no independent organization with a capacity to serve as Counterpart's focal point and partner for delivery of services and coordinating civil society activities. In early 2005, Counterpart's team comprised of Country Director and Grant Manager made a trip to Mary province to look for a potential partner in CSSI implementation. The mission was successful. Hemayat Economic Society with a branch in Mary city was selected as a partner. It was a strong independent organization with a capacity and facilities to deliver trainings and provide other civil society services as a Resource Center. Counterpart signed an institutional grant agreement with Hemayat in March 2005.

The subsequent implementation of the Community Action Grant (CAG) program resulted in the establishment of 14 satellite Community Resource Points (CRPs) operating around existing CSSCs and RCs:

- 4 in Ahal province (Kaahka town, Ruhabat town, and 2 in Ak Bugday region)
- 5 in Lebap province (Galkynysh region, Garashsyzyk region, Atamurat region, Koytendag region, and Seidi town)
- 2 in Dashoguz province (Koneurgench region and Dashoguz city)
- 2 in Mary province (Vekilbazar region and Mary region)
- 1 in Balkan province (Balkanabat town).

In order to fund the CSSC and RC operational, program and capacity building activities aimed at realizing civil society initiatives, supporting civil society organizations and local populations through delivery of quality demand-driven services Counterpart developed CSSC Institutional Support Grant package including a limited Solicitation for Proposals for the institutional development of CSSCs in Turkmenistan and grant proposal/self-assessment form in November 2003. The package was complemented by an Announcement of Resource Center/Point Support Grant Application developed in July 2005. According to these documents, the potential grantees completed self-assessment forms designed to identify their capacity-building needs. After that Counterpart staff visited each potential grantee and conducted participatory assessment to verify the needs of and services CSSCs/RCs would be able to provide. The assessment reports were submitted to the Grant Committee consisting of country CSSI program staff, representatives of international and local organizations and USAID/Turkmenistan representatives. After the approval, CSSC work plans were developed and institutional support grant partnership agreements signed. The grant funds were used only for activities directly connected with the implementation of the CSSI program.

Over the LOP Counterpart disbursed 30 CSSC/RC Institutional Support Grants amounting to \$349,392.03. The CSSC and RC activities resulted in mobilizing 209 communities, building the teams of Counterpart's 43 trainers and 111 potential facilitators, providing services for 12,891 visitors, conducting 203 trainings for 3,387 local people and realizing 132 community projects.

#### CSSC Network Management and Capacity Building

Over LOP, the network members all attended basic NGO organizational development trainings and received ongoing technical assistance, including consultations, partners' network meetings, workshops, exchange visits.

Counterpart actualized a scope of work towards a common vision, strategy and approach of the new program. Several documents such as the announcement for the CSSCs about CSSI program, Tentative Draft Management Transition document, division of the function of hub and CSSCs in framework of CSSI program, the performance plan and indicators of the CSSI program for three years and annual work plan were developed. The components of CSSI program such as network development, performance organization, advocacy, grant program and monitoring and evaluation of projects were reviewed from the point of view of local specific conditions. The new NGOs Law issued on November 2003 brought challenges for the CSSI program. According to the Law, activities of unregistered NGOs and groups, and any support of their work were prohibited. The obstacles of the new environment were taken into consideration and during the range of meetings new approaches of program implementation were defined.

On October 10, 2003, a strategic session was conducted with the participation of NGO leaders and representatives of international organizations to discuss Turkmenistan civil society development issues. During

the discussion, participants came to the conclusion that obstacles of external environment, lack of regulating mechanisms and legal basis led to underdevelopment of the third sector in Turkmenistan. There was a demand for further work in developing concepts and approaches of the civil society development in Turkmenistan.

On December 1-5, 2003, Counterpart Turkmenistan program staff participated in the regional workshop *Performance Based Management (PBM)* and learned the basic concept of PBM, and approaches and different tools of PBM. Following this training, Counterpart integrated the PBM mechanism in the existing network structure. Together with CSSC staff, Counterpart worked out a set of results-oriented criteria for the CSSCs, which enabled both CSSCs and Counterpart to assess their activity results and identify where they stand in relation to the rest of the network. Furthermore, the work plans and job descriptions of Ashgabat, Dashoguz and Lebap CSSCs staff were revised to align with individual performance objectives with the CSSCs' work plans, and the network staff was assigned responsibility for the outcomes of the defined key activities, desired results and standards.

All 3 CSSCs' and 6 RCs' activities were monitored and performance evaluated based on their monthly reports and performance indicators site visits by Counterpart program staff. Throughout the program implementation, Counterpart built the institutional capacity of CSSCs/RCs by identifying their needs and providing trainings, regular consultations on program implementation issues. Every six months Counterpart conducted regular CSSC/RC capacity assessments and helped them develop individual capacity building plans. All Centers performed in compliance with their work plans and Counterpart rules and procedures. Over time, the Centers especially improved their financial reporting and helped improve the planning process within the local communities making it more consistent with the PCA methodology.

With a view to build capacity of CSSCs and partner RCs in financial sustainability, *the Financial Sustainability and Social Entrepreneurship* trainings were delivered to managers and program coordinators of all centers.

To stimulate cross-learning among the network partners, Counterpart organized a series of network meetings for CSSC/RC staff. These network meetings ranged from issues related to Counterpart's Turkmenistan Office's localization, CSSI strategic goals and objectives, program implementation, service delivery, network structure and development, CSSC capacity building plans, grant and financial management, new NGO law and registration, adaptation of advocacy component and M&E tools, working with local communities, alternative approaches to community development, etc. In addition, networking was realized through joint activities and training, sharing resources and information. For example, Ashgabat CSSC was successful in delivering of capacity building of their trainers and these trainers helped to build the trainer pools in other regions. The best advocacy patterns and approaches were shared by Dashoguz CSSC. Partner Centers in Mary shared their experiences in developing relations with governmental organizations.

### **CSSC Network Service Delivery**

All CSSCs, RCs and CRPs have established client groups that they serve by providing demand-driven services. Through trainings and consultations, clients learn to design projects, conduct PCAs and develop CAPs, advocate for their interests, identify stakeholders, build social partnerships and resolve conflicts. Over LOP, CSSCs and RCs provided services for *12,891 visitors, conducted 50 Information clubs and 91 discussion clubs, and conducted 203 trainings for 3,387 participants.*

To ensure quality service delivery and CSSC and RC performance, Counterpart in collaboration with the network partners developed a set of *quality standards* for the services provided by network and discussed them during the CSSI partners network meeting in March 22-23, 2006. In April 2006, a formal *Quality Standards Manual* was introduced. Of all CSSCs, only Ashgabat CSSC conducted client satisfaction analysis on the semiannual basis through questionnaires distributed among CSSC visitors. The analysis of survey showed that 78.1% of people visited CSSC for consultations, 64.2% - for information, 53.12% - for trainings, 45.31% - for participating in round tables and discussion clubs and 15.62% - for using equipment services. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the services, 65.5% of the visitors appraised ACSSC's work as excellent, 24.1% said the services were very good, 10.3% said they were good and 3.4% of visitors gave no assessment.

### Training and Technical Assistance

In addition to trainings, consultations, information, access to Internet and office equipment CSSCs also provided financial assistance for initiative groups submitting their NGO registration documents to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The financial assistance covered charges for translation of NGO charters into Turkmen and MoJ registration fee. During CSSI, only 6 groups used this form of technical assistance.

Counterpart in cooperation with experienced leading trainers developed training program guidelines for the development and management of the local trainers' pool. Counterpart contracted and used the services of 43 trainers, 26 of whom are able to conduct trainings in the Russian and Turkmen languages. To develop trainers' capacity, Counterpart conducted a series of Training of Trainers on *NGO and Community, Local Project Management Part 1*, and *Fundraising* modules. Also, with a view to develop local trainers' capacity Counterpart conducted Training of Trainers on *NGO and Community, Local Project Management, Part 1* and *Fundraising* modules. Also, mini sessions for trainers on *Writing Training Reports, Mastering Power Point, Finding Force: Professional and Personal Consciousness of Trainers and Consultants, Expansion of Trainers Team Work tools, Evaluation of Trainers Work and Supervision, Legal Foundations of NGO Activities, Style of Thinking in Management of NGO, Basics of Effective and Striking Presentation, Time Management, Development of Discussion Conducting Skills* at Trainings were conducted.

CSSC and RC managers and program coordinators attended *Financial Sustainability and Social Entrepreneurship* trainings in May 2006. The newly gained skills in financial sustainability plan development and business plan development will help Centers in their localizing activities.

In support of the trainers' professional development, Counterpart introduced the *Training Travel Grant* mechanism in October 2005. A total of 20 trainers and community facilitators applied for these grants. With a view to build the capacity of community facilitators, viewed as potential trainers, Counterpart decided to invite facilitators to apply for the Training Travel Grant program. Seven groups of trainers were sent to Russian training centers such as Saint-Petersburg Non-Commercial Organizations Development Center, Saint Petersburg State University, Narodniy Fond Center, VIV Active Corporate Training Center and Cursus.Ru National Guild of Professional Consultants in Moscow. As a result, the trainers increased their knowledge in group management, leadership skills, negotiations, training development, public relations and conflict resolution. Applying what they learned in practice, the trainers developed and tested 7 new modules:

- *Leadership*
- *Conflict resolution*
- *Community Focus Group Management*
- *Negotiation Skills*
- *Public Relations for Communities*
- *Resource Center Management*
- *Technology of Trainings Development*

The training travel opportunity was extended to CSSC managers in January 2005; NGO and Community leaders in May 2005 to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, young NGO and Community leaders for Study Tours in Bulgaria (March 2006) and 2 community exchanges in Lebap province (creating a Community Anthology) and Mary–Ahal provinces (experience exchange of a community from Mary with a community in Ahal).

Over the life of the project, 204 trainings for 3,400 NGO and community representatives were delivered and 12 *Training Travel Grants* were awarded. Also, 21 *training modules* were adapted to the local conditions and translated into Turkmen.

***Objective 2: To engage in development activities identified and initiated by local communities in Turkmenistan.***

Given the operating challenges, in February 2005 Counterpart revised its approach of working with communities and decided to engage community facilitators to avoid possible tensions with the government. Primarily, the definition of civil society was expanded to incorporate individual activists and groups that were not registered under the NGO law, and the program focus shifted from the regional and national levels to the district and community levels. To this end, Counterpart developed and adopted new policies and procedures during the first year, and designed *Local Project Management* manual describing the methodology, approaches, and examples of project management for community facilitators.

Selection and Capacity Building of Community Facilitators

In 2005, Counterpart developed the *Local Project Management Guidelines* and set forth a system of selecting, contracting and working with community facilitators. The facilitator selection process was discussed at a

facilitators meeting at each CSSC. Furthermore, information on Methodology and project development process was introduced at Local Project Management trainings. Counterpart and branch CSSCs, as well as partner RCs, offered a series of *Local Project Management* trainings for civil society activists wishing to become facilitators. Within three years, 111 potential facilitators were trained, 51 of them signed temporary contracts to conduct PCAs and facilitate the process of CAP development, to train communities in writing CAG applications and to submit quality CAG proposals to the CSSI Grant Review Committee. The CSSCs and RCs coordinated activities of facilitators in communities, including conducting PCAs, designing CAPs, developing CAG proposals, and procuring and implementing projects.

To build the capacity of community facilitators, CSSCs and RCs invited them to regular meetings where they could meet with their counterpart, raise and discuss various issues, participatory methodologies, best practices and lessons learned. In January 2006, Counterpart organized a country-level meeting, which helped facilitators from all over the country to discuss the quality of CAG projects and impacts. Counterpart also promoted networking among facilitators, staging networking events in Ahal, Mary, Lebap and Dashoguz provinces. The facilitators were encouraged to take advantage of the *Training Travel Grants* which resulted in the development of a new module and visit exchange of 2 communities from the Mary and Akhal provinces. On July 6-8, 2005, community facilitators participated in a network meeting to discuss the ways of improving their work in bringing more quality projects.

### Community Action Grants

In October 2004, the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan (MFA) raised a concern about disbursement of grants in cash, because they feared that cash disbursement could lead to misinterpretation of Counterpart activities in Turkmenistan among authorities and population. MFA recommended finding an alternative mechanism for grant disbursement. Taking into consideration the MFA recommendation, Counterpart introduced the provision of “equipment grants” to community groups instead of cash grants, and adopted new rules and procedures in line with the international standards, donor requirements and local regulations to ensure control and transparency. This approach ensured participation of communities in project procurement activities and decreased the risk of errors and abuse.

Over LOP, community facilitators mobilized communities, conducted 209 PCAs, developed 209 CAPs and helped communities with writing Community Action Grant applications. Counterpart Grant Review Committee approved 140 community projects registered with the SAFI and disbursed US\$ 603,468 for the implementation of 132 community projects. The major criteria for CAG community group selection were democratic, participatory and transparent project development processes and procedures. To ensure transparency in the process of approving CAG proposals, Counterpart invited civil society actors, representatives of international organizations to the meetings of Grant Review Committees to discuss and select winning grant applicants.

	# of submitted proposals	# of approved proposals	# financed projects	Total grant amount disbursed
Round 1	19	9	7	\$21,327.64
Round 2	9	7	5	\$19,277.80
Round 3	17	16	12	\$51,991.59
Round 4	10	8	8	\$33,225.51
Round 5	22	12	11	\$46,502.40
Round 6	9	6	5	\$24,515.00
Round 7	16	15	15	\$60,414.37
Round 8	15	11	11	\$53,803.99
Round 9	22	15	15	\$66,513.61
Round 10	27	13	10	\$39,055.68
Round 11	7	5	5	18,392.05
Round 12	16	11	11	\$54,546.51
Round 13	46	25	25	\$113,902.14
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>\$603,468.29</b>

Counterpart and network partners closely monitored CAG projects during implementation and after project completion, to ensure legal and financial compliance and to evaluate project impact and sustainability. A total of 90 close out and 30 follow up evaluations were conducted. The evaluations demonstrated results and impacts:

- 338,000 direct beneficiaries and more than 845,000 indirect beneficiaries

- 21% of participating communities increased access to information and improved skills
- 14% improved provision of potable and irrigation water
- 9% improved health conditions
- 6% improved living conditions.
- Communities provided a costshare of US\$ 265,252
- Contributions by external partners exceeded US\$ 110,440.

All community projects had a *Sustainability Plan* to ensure long term maintenance of the infrastructure and services improved through mutual investment in the project by the community and by the government. The realization of CAG gave a sense of ownership, pride and commitment to sustaining the project impacts.

In August-September 2006, Counterpart conducted the *analysis of CAG effectiveness of 79 projects*. The assessment criteria included: community activeness, ownership, project sustainability, availability of leaders, networking, and partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders. The evaluation showed that the CAG project results had the positive impact on community development in terms of their mobilization, collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders and networking both at the provincial and country levels. Community members that implemented CAG projects gained experience in collaborative actions and became confident in solving other issues to improve their lives. The analysis revealed increased active civic position of local people, efficient information dissemination within communities, and the growing number of advocacy activities. The collaboration between the community and the government establishes trust between partners and gives the community confidence in engaging in dialogue with the government on other issues. Participatory decision making and election of responsible committees added to the institutional development of communities. These local committees served as informal community institutions recognized by the local authorities and as catalysts for positive changes in the communities.

The most important result of CAG grant program is that local people became more responsible for their own civic role and participated in elections for local representative bodies (Gengesh). According to the information provided from the sites, *24 community members* were nominated as candidates and *18 of them* were elected Gengesh members in Dashoguz, Mary, Lebap, and Ahal provinces of Turkmenistan. Implementation CAG program also resulted in establishment of 14 Community Resource Points in the rural areas, listed under Objective 1, operating around existing CSSCs and RCs.

To promote development of dialog with government and advocate for community interests Counterpart Turkmenistan developed *Community Advocacy Discretionary Grant program* and disbursed US\$ 2,987.62 to promote Mary farmer groups interests and conduct a Projects Fair held by NGO Polyot Flight Club community. The purpose of this type of grant was to support efforts of activists, community groups and NGOs in advocating for their interests. These grants were aimed at building a dialog and engaging the government in activities that would support NGO and community initiatives. Whereas most of CAGs had clear-cut infrastructure improvement related activities, Community Advocacy Discretionary Grants helped solve communities' urgent problems and necessities through building firm partnerships and advocacy actions.

For instance, Ilkinjiler Farmers Group used this grant to explain the provisions of newly passed Land Code to tenants of Mary province and helped them conclude long-term lease agreements with local government. The farmers learned that they have a right to be independent tenants without joining newly-formed joint-stock associations. As a result of this elucidative activities Mary province farmers turned to Mary province Land Allocation Service and relevant departments in the district (etrap) administrations (hakimliks) with a request to re-register, in accordance with the new Land Code, land plots that they had been leasing. The community also had several meetings with the officials of provincial and district land allocation departments and obtained legal acts regulating activities of joint-stock societies, cotton and wheat producers. The group also studied possibilities of establishing independent joint-stock associations in case farmers were prohibited to work as independent tenants. Within this grant, the group provided consultations to individual farmers if their rights were abused. With the help of this grant, NGO *Polyot Flight Club* was able to advertise its light aviation devices (hang-gliders and thermal air balloons) among representatives of ministries, departments and companies. The community received three proposals on joint realization of projects on use of devices in fighting pests from the Ministry of Agriculture and keeping records of animal migration in natural preserves and monitoring sand migration from the Ministry of Nature Protection.

**Objective 3: To support and strengthen the capacity development of NGOs, community-based organizations and community activists in initiating and promoting community initiatives which engage the government in a dialogue.**

Despite the obstacles presented after the introduction of the NGO Law in 2003, Counterpart continued to work with registered Turkmen NGOs and CBOs by building their capacity and encouraging them to establish linkages with the government and engage them in dialogue and development activities. Counterpart supported CSSCs/RCs in establishing and maintaining various forums for discussions on civil society issues among NGOs, CBOs, community initiative groups, associations, businesses and government.

In September 2004, Counterpart in cooperation with Social Impact conducted a 3-day forum *Local Projects Development and Implementation Planning* with financial and logistic support from AED. Using the *Appreciative Inquiry* methodology, the forum focused on such issues as best practices of partnership at the local level, joint planning of actions, possible contribution of participants to the country's development plan, terminology used in the context of sustainable development and engaging international organizations for realization of local projects. The high profile event was attended by 50 participants including middle-rank representatives of state institutions, entrepreneurs, public organizations, media and public at large. The participants worked out mechanisms and methods of cooperation during implementation of locally designed projects aimed towards sustainable development.

**Institutional Support Grants**

To strengthen the institutional capacity and support the program activities of organizations having the established clientele in their focus area and the experience in successful realization of their mission, Counterpart provided institutional support grants to registered Turkmen NGOs. The grant support sought to empower NGOs so that their activities could have tangible impacts. Under this condition, NGOs should have explained how the institutional grant would help them to expand the scope and increase the impact of their activities. The grant was also aimed at organizational development. While applying for the grant, organizations should have explained how the institutional grant will be used to strengthen their capacity, including the staff, in the long term. The institutional support was meant to stimulate long-term strategic development of the organization as well. Applicants needed to explain how the institutional grant will facilitate achieving the mission of the organization, fit in the strategic development plan and increase the organization's sustainability.

Under the *Institutional Grant Support Program*, a total of US\$ 113,416 was disbursed to 6 NGOs:

<b>Grantee name</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>
NGO <i>Accountant of Turkmenistan</i>	Economics	\$14,999
NGO <i>Keyik Okara</i>	Family, youth, women	\$14,993
NGO <i>Agama Mountaineering Club</i>	Environment, tourism	\$15,000
National Para Olympic Committee of Turkmenistan	Disabled	\$15,000
National Ushu Federation of Turkmenistan	Sports	\$14,460
Lebab Branch of Nature Protection Society	Environment	\$14,964
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$113,416</b>

Counterpart monitored 6 institutional grantees and evaluated 2 of them. In general, all projects were completed. NGOs strengthened their membership base, governance, material and technical basis. Contacts with local officials and relationships with other NGOs were established.

Counterpart closely followed the process of registration of those few NGOs trying to register under the new NGO Law in the country. Based on the studies of the situation, Counterpart, together with the ICNL, worked out a package of sample documents to ease and assist in the registration process of the NGOs willing to apply for registration with the Ministry of Justice. Technical assistance and 6 Registration Support Grants totaling US\$ 1,771.24 was provided to civil society groups wishing to register their own NGOs with the Justice Ministry to assist them in registration process.

Much attention was paid to the development of network activities among CSSCs, RCs and communities. For instance, Goldav RC developed partnership relations with Ilkinjiler RC and Ak Bugday CRP. The communities improved skills on establishing a dialogue with local authorities. CSSCs and RCs provided consultations on conducting stakeholder meetings in the Kaahka region, (Akhhal province), Gurbansoltan edge region (Dashoguz province), Garashsyzyk region (Lebab province) and Mary city communities. The local stakeholders meeting showed that authorities at the local level are open and supportive of the citizens' initiative. They acknowledge the

input and positive impacts of local community members' work and are open to further collaboration. It is vital to note that collaboration is characterized by the government representatives' recognition of their own responsibilities.

CSSCs and RCs identified and built the capacity of *64 civil society activists* who organized various activities within their communities. The role of local activists is shifting more towards raising the issue and finding ways of bringing stakeholders together to make positive changes. For instance:

- A stakeholders meeting held in "Merv" RC stressed that the working group created at a previous meeting successfully implemented the actions plan (events on work with Mary Boarding School # 2) and defined plans for the next period.
- ACSSC and LCSSC coordinated an organization of networking meetings between communities of Ashgabat city and Gokdepe region in Akhal province and communities of Turkmenabat city and Galkynysh region in Lebap province. The working group was created at the network meeting of activists and community leaders in Lachin CRP (School # 41, Ruhabad town, Ahal province). The working group will coordinate the CRP activities and plan joint activities (conducting trainings, street cleaning campaigns, and meetings with the population on elections to Local Councils).
- A Community Council was organized during the network meeting of 5 communities in Turkmenabat city, Lebap province. It will oversee the project's realization, provision of access to the results of the projects, and plan steps aimed at fundraising. During the Round Tables held at Diller Dunyasi RC, Turkmenbashi city, Balkan province, participants made various proposals that were then realized. For instance, one of such proposals was the establishment of a Neighbors' Common Fund to improve yards and engage youth in civic activities through volunteering.

### **Facilitation of Forums for Discussion of Civil Society Issues**

Counterpart and its network used every opportunity to establish and maintain various forums for discussions on civil society issues, involving NGOs, CBOs, community initiative groups, local government and other stakeholders. Linkages, networking and exchanges were promoted whenever possible.

#### Discussion Clubs

To create a space for citizens and communities to gather, network and exchange information and ideas, CSSCs and RCs facilitated regular, informal discussion clubs at their own premises. Over the project life, they conducted *49 discussion clubs* for community activists, NGO representatives, and facilitators. The discussions covered a broad range of issues such as establishing and registering professional doctors associations, NGO leadership, Internet access to public activists, community development and future projects, community networking and approaches to social partnership with government bodies.

#### Round Table Discussions

RC Diller Dunyasi conducted *6 round table discussions* on various topics regarding local activism development, civil position of citizens attended by activists and entities of state representatives. Participants discussed issues of joint activities, current town problems, including residential houses in the city, and proposals to create groups of local residents to landscape the areas around houses. These discussions resulted in creating a Residential Building Neighbors Committee to look after the cleanliness of adjacent yards, helped the community of one of the houses to attract the attention of the Housing Administration's representative to the broken water conduit and its subsequent repair, and raise the awareness of local people in Turkmenbashi city of the importance of educational process in schools and language centers.

#### Stakeholder meetings

*Four local stakeholder meetings* were coordinated by CSSCs and partner organizations. The meetings showed that authorities at the district level are open to and supportive of citizens' initiatives. They acknowledged the input and positive impacts of the local community members' work and are open to collaboration. It is noteworthy that collaboration is characterized by the government representatives' recognition of their own responsibilities. The role of local activists is shifting towards raising the issue and finding the ways of bringing the interested parties together to make positive changes.

- Implementers of local projects in Gurbasoltan eje region, Dashoguz province, held a stakeholders meeting to discuss the local projects results, lessons learned and further plans in April 2006. 23 activists, members of

public organizations, stakeholders represented by local authorities and institutions – heads of villages, deputy heads of local councils, district Education Department representatives, Water Supply Department, heads of Construction and Electric Power Supply departments attended the meeting. Participants concluded that most of common problems could have been solved if local activists and stakeholders met together at not only a village level as it had been before, but on the district level. To improve the situation, the participants decided to select a working group focusing on developing plans of engaging local authorities to improve the electricity supply for population of the district. Right after the meeting the working group went to the head of village to discuss the action plan.

- The community of sportsmen, their parents, trainers, sport amateurs of Lebap province conducted their stakeholders meeting on May 26, 2006. The meeting was held at Garazsyzyk region's Sport School. Representatives of local authorities (hakimlik) and provincial Sports Committee actively attended the meeting. The participants presented results of their CAG projects, shared information materials developed under the projects, discussed impacts of the projects and developed future plans of local initiatives realization. During the stakeholders meeting the participants planned further steps in realization of local initiatives. For instance, within half a year the construction of chess club will be started with the participation of all stakeholders that attended the meeting.
- Merv RC conducted the stakeholders meeting on May 2, 2006. Eighteen participants including representatives from government institutions and communities attended the meeting. They formed a working group to coordinate actions to assist the disabled community of Mary city in solving their issues and drew up the Action Plan. The working group assisted the disabled children of Boarding School # 2 in Mary city by repairing a van and a pool. Now, children use this van to go to the sport complex for special physical exercises. Organization of these classes was possible due to activists' negotiations with the Sports School, which provided trainers and schedule of trainings.
- In April 2006, community activists of Ak Bugday district conducted the stakeholders meeting of 3 villages. Twenty activists and stakeholders met together to discuss the role and further development of cooperation and partnership for local project implementation in the social sphere. The participants openly exchanged views on the necessity of cooperation and coordination among stakeholders during local project planning, implementing and evaluation. The main conclusion of the meeting was to promote the local informal community leaders for membership to Gengesh (Local Councils) in the forthcoming elections. The meeting ended with selection of a working group representing all 3 villages including activists and local authorities (deputy of archin of Parahat village) to develop a plan of engaging local citizens and government institutions in the joint activities in the social sphere.

#### Local Project Presentations

To mark CSSI completion and to demonstrate the results of program implementation, *two local project presentations* were conducted by Ashgabat CSSC and Lebap CSSC. LCSSC held a presentation of successful local projects on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. *Twenty four communities*, together with their stakeholders and partners from government and commercial sectors of Lebap province, had an opportunity to learn about the community action grant results across the province. The presentation was the first public event conducted in the past 4 years in the Lebap province. Community Outreach Manager and LCSSC staff made their own presentations of CSSI program implementation in Lebap province where other communities prepared and shared their information stands and made their own presentations. This is significant in the communication of knowledge, ideas, and suggestions towards the development of a strong network.

On June 20, 2006, Counterpart assisted ACSSC to conduct the presentation of successful local projects. A total of 97 *participants* took part in the event, including 80 *representatives of CAG communities* from Akhal province and 7 representatives of government institutions. Representatives from international organizations (US Embassy, USAID, Counterpart International, UNFPA, EDP, AED, ICNL, CASE company (USA)) also attended the event. In addition, 17 representatives of Mary, Lebap, Dashohuz, Balkan communities were also invited. Counterpart prepared an electronic presentation of CSSI program in Turkmenistan and presented a 10-minute film *Community Project Achievements*. The film demonstrated positive results and impacts of project implementation. The ACSS prepared a Power point presentation of ACSSC activities from the last 3 years. At the end of the presentation, there was an award ceremony for the communities which successfully implemented their projects.

### Networking and Exchanges

With technical support from CSSCs and RCs, local activists organized 21 *networking activities* across all provinces to exchange experience and best practices in project implementation, collaboration and networking for self-funded projects, successful models, and fundraising. Representatives from the communities discussed the role of stakeholders' collaboration in local project planning and implementation and further ways of partnership development in the social sphere. Communities also discussed the strategy of promoting their own activists as candidates to the local councils (gengesh).

### Study Tours

During the program, 4 *study tours* were organized for Turkmen civil society activists, including NGO and community leaders, facilitators and government representatives. In May 2005, with the support from AED, a study tour of 10 community leaders and facilitators to communities of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was organized. The purpose of the trip was to learn the experience of communities of the visited countries, their approaches and methods in community mobilization, social partnership, the role of leaders, community networking systems and procedures, stakeholders' involvement and positive relationship development.

The tour was reciprocated by the visit of Kyrgyzstan NGO and Community leaders to Turkmenistan. During the study tours, participants shared their experiences in the local project implementation and networks development. The participants designed plans for network development and learned about the Community Funds program.

Upon returning from the Bulgaria Study Tour on March 19-25, 2006, which was aimed at building the capacity of 14 young leaders representing Turkmen state entities, NGOs and communities in developing social partnership through introducing the Bulgarian social contracting experience, the participants from Balkan, Dashoguz and Mary provinces made presentations about the Tour of NGO and community leaders. In turn, the government representatives participating in the program, gained knowledge, partnership development, innovative methods of interaction and social development enterprises in Bulgaria for activists, facilitators, and trainers of their provinces. This is essential to providing a healthy partnership between the actors towards community development.

On the project "Developing Media Skills of NGOs and Communities" supported by the British Embassy, Counterpart negotiated with the Eco-Center CSSC from Kazakhstan to host a tour aimed at training NGO representatives to produce social advertising films. Two members of NGO Keyik Okara participated in the study tour. Participants attended a seminar held at the Faculty of Journalism, Karaganda State University in Kazakhstan and drew up the plan of follow-up activities that included the demonstration of films at Information Clubs, the development of the training module, conducting the training of the module and the creation of the documentary on the activities of NGO "Keyik Okara".

Following their return home, the NGO Keyik Okara members made and edited two films. One of them, *Break*, is a PSA clip, and the other one, *The World in Children's Eyes*, is a social film. In addition, representatives of NGO Keyik Okara provided information on the Karaganda Study Tour (KZ) and films and presented them to activists, communities and NGOs. The NGO also developed the *Development of Social Films* training module and conducted the first training on March 25-30, 2006. The training was designed for target NGOs and Communities. Fourteen representatives from 7 NGOs and Communities participated in it. As a result of the seminar, the participants developed two short films and one public service advertisement. The participants developed seven plans for future work on developing social films on their organizations, project implementations, etc. for promoting their interests, results of work and projects.

IT Specialist assisted the team of NGOs and communities who participated in training for the "Development of Social films" to develop Social Films on their organizations. As a result, 2 films on physical hope and successes and health-related issues to smoking. In addition, the Keyik Okara NGO members created a social public film "Earth" about pollution of the environment were edited and completed.

### ***Objective 4: To develop an enabling environment for civil society by improving the legal framework and providing regular legal advice and services to support civil society organizations.***

Due to limited opportunities for legal reform under the current political regime, ICNL activities focused mainly on assisting CSOs through analysis of and comments to enacted legislation, consultations and distributing information among organizations to facilitate operations. The ICNL Network of lawyers has been the resource of

last resort for CSOs and common citizens in the face of increasing government pressure and misinformation. Four lawyers provided *more than 2,200 consultations* in four cities (Ashgabat, Turkmenabat, Dashoguz and Turkmenbashi). Consultations covered topics such as: the registration procedure, legal options for operating without registration, rules on grant-making/receiving aid with the State Agency for Foreign Investment, taxation, understanding of labor rights issues, expertise on charters and technical assistance for registration. In this challenging environment, ICNL Network lawyers assisted NGOs with pursuing mandatory re-registration and appealing denials of such re-registration in the face of the new law. ICNL Network lawyers provided NGOs with sample charters and other documents needed to successfully complete registration.

#### Creating a Nationwide Network of NGO Lawyers

During the course of the project, ICNL's Network Lawyers continued to improve their capacity to assist civil society, benefiting from ICNL's substantive and professional development trainings and other technical assistance. The network lawyers used their knowledge to conduct legal consultations (described above) and to educate others in their communities. Over the course of the project, ICNL conducted *9 training sessions* in Turkmenistan benefiting at least four Network lawyers. In addition, ICNL Network lawyers participated in *4 regional events*, where they collaborated with a global network of lawyers and studied with NGO lawyers in Ukraine, Hungary and other Central Asian Countries.

As a result of rigorous training, ICNL enabled one lawyer in Turkmenistan to become renowned expert in NGO law. This lawyer is a well known resource for others in the NGO community. This expert regularly assists other lawyers to address complex NGO law issues.

#### Making Information on NGO Legal Issues Available Through Publications

ICNL developed the following publications that have been distributed widely in hard copy or made available in electronic form:

- *Legal Resources Handbook for Civil Society Actors* – Published with support from USAID and AED, this legal resource book in Turkmen language contains all relevant legislation for civil society actors in Turkmenistan. This legal resource book provides civil society actors with a one-stop reference for the laws and regulations affecting civil society in Turkmenistan. The book is part one of a two part educational materials project. Part two includes the creation of a guidebook to registration. Based on the lack of information from government sources these texts are vital to civil society in understanding the legal environment in which they must operate.
- *Guide for Registration of Public Associations* - As part of this process, ICNL has met with various agencies and arms of the Turkmen Government. ICNL conducted numerous meetings with government officials, foreign donors and local organizations in preparing this guide. In addition, ICNL visited banks, the police department and notary public offices in an effort to determine the total expenditures required for document preparation in the process of applying for registration with the Ministry of Adalat.
- *Analyses of Common Mistakes in the Registration Process* - ICNL staff conducted a review of the experience of several organizations that had been refused registration by the Ministry of Justice to determine if these were legitimate rejections and, if so, what the common problems were. ICNL found out that almost all the organizations had been refused on legitimate legal grounds and that many organizations had already tried to re-register, each time being refused on legitimate grounds. The final analysis was completed and submitted to USAID, OSCE, and USAID implementing partners, as well as the network attorneys, so that these mistakes can be avoided in the future.
- *Legal Resource Book for Farmers* - Published in Russian and Turkmen, this book provides farmers a one-stop reference for the laws and regulations affecting their activities and responsibilities under Turkmen legislation. The handbook was published as part of a seminar within the START training program.

## B. Best Practices

### Regional

#### Appreciative Inquiry

AI approach changed the methods of PCA conducting- providing information and positively establishing relations. It was introduced to the training program as a success story and presenting the writing and daily activities of trainers, facilitators and CSSCs and RCs. The PCA and the Appreciative Inquiry established confidence, skills and strategies within the communities for solving their urgent problems and needs. Community leaders and facilitators trained at Counterpart seminars were able to find the best histories and successes of their joint work and there fore define the strengths of communities. This enabled them to design their vision for further development and realization of their goals.

#### Financial Sustainability Through Diversification

The six pronged approach is not a one-size-fits-all model, but a flexible asset-driven (rather than donor-driven) model that assists NGOs in developing long-term financial sustainability plans that mix and match multiple financial sustainability strategies to fit any particular organization's need. As a management tool, the FSAP tool helps organizations to effectively and independently evaluate their current financial situation and strategically plan for their financial future through a Self Financial Diagnosis, Strategic Financial Sustainability, and Income Diversification Planning.

#### Participatory Approach

Participation and buy-in of staff and boards of directors in the discussion and development of organizational strategies and policies is very important. All relevant staff should be included in policy development, and it is best to get their comments and recommendations for the improvement of policies and making them more practical. Getting various opinions and ideas during the drafting process contributes to creation of clear and useful policies and ensures teambuilding.

#### Social Partnership

Social partnership was the major component of a successful community project in development and implementation. The government, business, and communities developed result-based partnerships that yielded concrete benefits for local communities.

#### Performance Based Management

PBM was applied to all program activities with adherence to the highest quality monitoring and performance measurement standards. The quality standards were developed and used by CSSI implementers to meet the requirements and program indicators. The reporting and planning systems have been brought into correspondence with a result-oriented approach. PBM was also applied in interactions with trainers and facilitators. The system of monitoring and feedbacks ensured the maximum quality of performance of trainers and facilitators. The links between CSSCs / RCs, facilitators and trainers worked both ways; the comments and suggestions from trainers and facilitators were accepted and integrated into the program.

### Kazakhstan

#### Repeat-clients practice

One of the best practices for generating new projects is targeting repeated businesses from already existing clients. ARGO has successfully the management and drafting of a long-term training program for ARAL TENIZI (ARGO provided for them Financial Sustainability Training in November, 2005).

#### Business Organization Registration

An opportunity to establish and register an independent business organization within the frame of NGO became a top priority for the Social Enterprise development. An independent business organization has more opportunities for investment, loan, etc. In addition, business organizations have an advantage in taxation over NGOs, falling into the state support program of small medium enterprise.

### Win-Win Approach

ARGO used a win-win approach in negotiations for organizing the NGO and Business Partnership Forum involving important stakeholders and providing opportunity for various opinions during the forum discussions.

### Social Enterprise

ARGO implemented the idea of social enterprise. The goal of our social enterprise / fee for service program was to help NGOs strengthen their sustainability by developing commercial ventures using for-profit business planning and market strategies to support NGO activities. Through funding from Counterpart, ARGO issued six recoverable social enterprise loans to NGOs and trained them in all aspects of social enterprise, including business planning, asset diversification, market analysis, human resources, production plan development, legal framework and taxation. All social enterprises are fully functioning and ARGO already received back 99.12% in repayment.

### Private Public Partnership

*NGO and Business Partnership* forum organized by ARGO resulted in an increasing interest of businesses in the development of Corporate Social Responsibility. The forum proved to be an open and free discussion platform that promised shared visions and further partnerships between business communities and NGOs. One of the best practices at the forum was using partnership approach and involving all sectors interested in the issue. The forum was the first step to build networking and professional linkages among representatives of different sectors that led to negotiations of future partnerships.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

### Institutional Support for Sector specific NGOs

The analysis of the evaluation of 8 leading NGOs showed that the institutional support provided by ACSSC made a positive influence on the organizational development of these NGOs. The analysis of initial assessment and final evaluation results revealed that the target NGOs improved their strategic planning as well as their planning for financial sustainability, improved management, and performance appraisal practices.

### Exchange visits for NGOs

The analysis of the reports of the winners of the Network Exchange Program revealed the effectiveness of the exchange between networks in and out of KR. The exchange visits contributed to the network organizational capacity as the networks obtained new knowledge and skills on related topics, shared their experiences and established new partnership linkages with other NGO Networks.

### Networking is a tool for boosting development performance

Civil society actors are pushed more and more towards collaboration and sharing knowledge and experience, in order to upgrade their performance through collective action, to cope with a growing complexity of development problems and to be able to participate effectively in policy debate at the highest levels. Investments in networking are contributions to institutional development, to developing intra- and inter-organizational capacities for dealing with different challenges and new horizons.

### Organization Development Tools

Conducting initial assessment/diagnosis of OD including a feedback meeting on the assessment results and design of future directions and goals and action planning is an effective mechanism in working with NGO toward improving their organizational development. During TA it is very important to get feedback with the NGO on a regular base - using a participatory approach in the monitoring of action plan implementation, consultations, and needs assessments.

### SIAP methodology

SIAP helps local governments improve planning for community-level service provision by helping them improve the establishment and maintenance of good relationships with local communities in order to uphold a good public image. The SIAP is an excellent framework for enabling local governments to make decisions regarding the best use of scarce resources. The UI team emphasized to all working groups that the objective of the SIAP process is to help communities work with local governments to help improve services and reduce expectations of donor assistance to fund services or infrastructure. As a result of UI's technical assistance, working groups began to focus on internal funding from the local government to improve service delivery, in several cases leading to an allocation of additional resources within the budget.

## Turkmenistan

### Recruitment of Community Facilitators

Counterpart's creative approach in utilizing community facilitators in community mobilization proved to be very effective. A total of 51 local facilitators played a key role in engaging of all stakeholders and mobilizing local resources, educating communities, building the confidence of community groups and activists, promoting participatory decision making, as well as assisting communities to gain the trust of local authorities. This decentralization and localization of ensured sustainability and institutionalization of international civil society development best practices at the local community level.

### Procurement

- Taking into consideration the MFA recommendation, Counterpart began to disburse equipment grants to community groups instead of cash grants. This approach ensured participation of communities in project procurement activities and decreased the risk of mistakes and abuse. Rules and procedures in line with the international standards, donor requirements and local regulations to ensure control and transparency were applied.
- To ensure efficient and effective procurement, Counterpart decentralized the procurement process by delegating the procurement in Dashoguz, Lebap, Ahal provinces directly to branch CSSCs, while Counterpart procurement officer continued to oversee procurement for Balkan and Mary provinces. This approach helped expedite the procurement process and meet deadlines.
- To ensure compliance with the national legislation of Turkmenistan, and transparent and fair procurement process, as well as ensure cash security, Counterpart introduced tenders for commodity suppliers. Representatives of international organizations, and local NGOs were invited to take part as Tender Commission members to decide on bids and select suppliers. Upon the Tender Commission decision, subsequent contracts were signed. The practice also helped avoid overspending and speed up the procurement process.
- In addition, to improve financial accountability of communities during the procurement process and their understanding of the procurement procedure, Counterpart introduced the practice of conducting mini-sessions on the rules and procedures of procurement for grant winning communities. Conducted for representatives of communities within 3-5 days after the projects were approved by GRC, these trainings helped communities to update/revise their budgets in accordance with GRC comments and prepare procurement plans in accordance with Counterpart's requirements.

### Trainers Capacity Development

The innovative *Training Travel Grants* program provided local trainers with opportunity to increase their training capacity. Trainers acquainted themselves with experience of organizing and conducting of trainings, establishing and managing of training and consulting centers. As a result of the newly developed training modules, civil society actors learned about leadership skills development, negotiation establishment and management of resource centers, and development of PR for communities. In fact, these modules are in high demand by communities.

## C. Challenges and Lessons Learned

### Kazakhstan

#### Introduction of Newly Developed Policies and Procedures

One of the main challenges for the pre-certification was that most of the policies were newly developed and not thoroughly discussed with staff. After all major policies and procedures were finalized, the SMT held several internal sessions to train ARGO staff.

#### Diagnostic Tool for FSAP

FSAP and Asset diversification tools became a good opportunity for CSSCs to plan and perform their financial diversification policy. However, CSSCs still missed a specific financial tool that shows the financial situation in cash for analysis of FS development dynamics. Therefore, ARGO, FSO, with the assistance of CPI Deputy Chief of Party, developed a diagnostic tool for CSSCs and presented it at the CSSC Managers Meeting. ARGO stressed importance of this tool to view cash-flow and sustainability of organization with all costs.

### Pre-certification challenges

Changes and improvements should be taken into account of for the following: developing ARGO-specific programmatic and financial / administrative procedures many times from scratch; engaging BOD in the entire Pre-Certification process and receiving Board approval on all policies and procedures (especially governance and strategic management procedures); making enough time for scheduling information-sharing sessions with all ARGO staff on both financial / administrative and programmatic policies and procedures; keeping up with tracking and reporting of impacts of pre-certification and how it relates to improved organizational performance.

### Pre-certification lessons

Financial / Administration and Programmatic target areas of Pre-Certification are equally critical and for the most part interrelated; managing pre-certification process needs special attention because it is a challenge to coordinate such a complex process and monitor results in such a short period of time; involve all staff in discussing all six cutting-edge policies affecting organizational growth; involve outside consultants (not familiar with organization) in Pre-Certification Auditing process; local legislature requirements for human resources and finance should be considered equally with international donor standards.

### CDT Support

ARGO has learned to receive support from CDT in both monitoring and procedure development on an as-needed basis rather than a regular basis. This practice began to take place after the Senior Management Team was put into effect and has helped ARGO's transition period into full independence run smoothly.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

### TA for CAG grantees

Monitoring visits, including consulting services on advocacy issues, for communities is the most effective tool for providing TA for local communities in helping them implement their CAG project. Conducting training workshops on advocacy do not provide enough technical assistance for implementing advocacy projects effectively. In addition, during monitoring visits communities, it has been observed that the current situation with CAG projects have challenges with their advocacy strategy, and are provided with consultations that can help communities improve their project management and advocacy strategy.

### SIAP

One-day workshop is not sufficient enough to make the SIAP tool understandable for local government officials and NGOs because representatives of local governments couldn't spend the whole day at the training. Moreover, the SIAP concept is new and complicated.

One thing that local SIAP Working Groups (generally made up of local officials and civil society representatives) found out from the surveys was that many people did not know about local government services or did not believe that these services could be improved. These results brought to light the importance of active, constructive engagement of civil society with local government in the improvement of services. In Uch Korgon, the Kerben CSSC stated that at first, the local government saw civil society efforts as "interference" in their work, but then they began to see that the SIAP was feasible and that there could be significant results from implementing it.

### Networking

It takes time to build relationships, trust and ownership, and to gradually build a shared vision and effective ways of planning, operating and facilitating networking activities. As a consequence, it is of no use to fund networks that focus on short term projects, receiving support for 3-4 years. Networking needs *long term commitments*, not only from member institutions and individuals but also from donors. For the sake of sustainability networks are preferably funded by more than one donor- each providing a part of the total support needed.

### Advocacy projects

1) the effectiveness of trainings on advocacy techniques depends on the amount of time and efforts put into preparing NGOs before the training, and following up with them afterwards; 2) the triad of training, technical assistance, and small-grant support is effective in building advocacy capacity; 3) decisions about which advocacy activities are appropriate for support by foreign assistance groups must be done with prudence to avoid inappropriate interference in the recipient nation's internal affairs.

### A mix of local and external perspectives is productive

Foreign advocacy advisors can combat local pessimism by showing that significant change is possible even within existing power structures. The experience of local NGO personnel can suggest how best to promote such change.

### Policy Fellows

Training a mixed student group of advocacy CSO staff and government officials works very well in dispelling stereotypes on both sides and building relations for future positive collaboration.

## **Turkmenistan**

### New NGO Law

At the end of 2003, after the adoption of the new NGO Law, the Justice Ministry of Turkmenistan was putting pressure on unregistered NGOs and made visits to the branch CSSCs to monitor their activities. To avoid raising the Ministry's suspicion, Counterpart resolved to scale down the CSSCs scopes of work to resource center services. At the same time, Counterpart suggested that CSSCs conduct cultural events to bring together civil society actors to exchange views on the new situation in an informal way as a way to provide some guidance to civil society actors.

### Dealing with Local Government

Due to restrictions imposed by local authorities, Lebap CSSC was not able to conduct trainings and public meetings at the CSSC for over a year, even though Counterpart regularly provided the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with CSSC training schedules. The situation was resolved, after the LCSSC Acting Manager was met with an official from the local administration, present all available documents on Counterpart's status in Turkmenistan and explained that the information about trainings was regularly supplied to MFA. The official agreed to allow the CSSC to conduct trainings if they provided a copy of Counterpart's letter to MFA. Once the letter was provided, the situation improved and CSSC was able to start conducting trainings and other activities.

### Organization of Social Partnership Forum

Counterpart and AED had planned to conduct the *Social Partnership Forum* in Akhal province and Ashgabat on September 29-30, 2005. However, the event was cancelled by the MFA on September 15, 2005. The program staff discussed the situation and chose a new strategy for holding the Forum. The program staff targeted the National Nature Protection Society of Turkmenistan that had proposed holding similar activities, but the problem was that the Society's institutional project was not registered with the Ministry of Justice. Counterpart decided to organize individual stakeholder meetings at the local level at each province. This strategy proved successful, and a total 5 stakeholder meetings were held in regions.

### Local Network Formalizing

Aiming to localize branch CSSCs, Counterpart recommended that they find forms to register themselves either as NGOs or economic entities. However, given the reluctance of the Ministry of Justice to register new NGOs, Counterpart has narrow opportunities to formalize the local network in Turkmenistan.

## **D. Coordination and Cooperation**

## **Kazakhstan**

### International Program Evaluators Network (IPEN)

In the fall of 2005, the International Program Evaluators Network (IPEN) invited ARGO to co-organize its 5<sup>th</sup> annual international conference *Programs Impact Assessment*, which attracted 155 participants from 17 countries. At the conference, more than 30 new professional linkages were established and up to 5 new network projects were discussed on cross-country level. The conference made it possible for participants to share their best practices in M&E with professionals from numerous countries.

### KIMEP

ARGO involved Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Management (KIMEP) as informational and agenda contributing partner which provided more visibility for the forum NGO and Business Partnership and its ideas.

## UNDP/GEF

In July 2005, ARGO became a partner organization of GEF in which the responsibility included administering the community mobilization ecology projects and helping SGP provide local solutions to global environmental challenges within the project “Scheduled grant on development of project proposals within SGP/GEF on community mobilization”.

## Central Election Committee (CEC)/OSCE

During the implementation of the *Civil Society for Free and Fair Elections* program, ARGO developed a close and fruitful relationship with the Central Election Committee (CEC). The Civic Election Forum, established by ARGO, worked in close collaboration with both the Kazakhstani CEC and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to implement the project.

## American Chamber of Commerce

ARGO and the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) co-organized the *Forum on Private Public Partnership*. Consequently, ARGO participated in AmCham’s planning session for the year of 2006 of Corporate Social Responsibility and joined it Working Group of Corporate Social Responsibility formed in January 2005 in response to the growing interest from the corporate and social sector to promote CSR best practices in Kazakhstan.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

### Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan

ACSSC implemented three projects with support of the Soros Foundation Kyrgyzstan: a project to ensure open and fair parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kyrgyz Republic by increasing knowledge and promoting skills of citizens in the election procedures; organization of a national NGO Forum in April 2005; and an analytical research on civil society development in Kyrgyzstan.

### Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

The coalition participated in different advocacy activities initiated by the ACSSC, including “I’m for honest elections” national advocacy campaign and was responsible for conducting monitoring of the presidential elections on a national level, training observers of presidential candidates, and providing the participation short- and long-term election observers.

### International Center InterBilim

InterBilim is an NGO that provides support to CSOs in Kyrgyzstan. Interbilim branches in Bishkek and Osh used to serve as CSSCs. Interbilim supports ACSSC’s advocacy activities on a national level. Much like the coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, InterBilim was a member of the network established in the framework of the “I’m for honest elections” National Advocacy Campaign.

### Resource Center for Aged people (NGO Umut Balykchy)

Resource Center for Aged people is a local NGO promoting the interest of the elderly through technical assistance and financial support. The Center received grant from CPI in the framework of the institutional support grant program. ACSSC provided TA for the NGO on organizational development. The Center supported ACSSC’s advocacy activities and other events on a national level.

## **Turkmenistan**

### AED

Counterpart Turkmenistan and AED maintained long term cooperation during CSSI implementation. They jointly organized a number of public events and study tours, including:

- August 2003: Study tour to Uzbekistan “Promotion and Marketing of NGO Services”
- July 2004: Study tour to Almaty, Kazakhstan, Training of Trainers Training program
- August 2004: Study tour to Novosibirsk, Russia, Network Managers Experience Exchange Visit
- September 2004: Study tour to Kazakhstan, “NGOs Election Study tour to Kazakhstan”
- September 2004: NGO and Community Leaders Capacity Building Forum in Ashgabat
- January 2005: Study tour of CSSC managers to Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyzstan
- July 2005: NGO leaders study tour to Saint -Petersburg
- May 2005: Community leaders exchange visit to Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic

- August 2005: Kyrgyzstan community leaders' exchange visit to Turkmenistan
- March 2006: Study Tour of young NGO and community leaders to Bulgaria

#### The British Embassy

Counterpart cooperated with the British Embassy in the implementation of a number of joint projects. The *Guidebook for Nonprofit Organizations*, funded by the embassy, was translated into Turkmen and distributed among NGOs, communities, facilitators, trainers and activists. A Media Center was opened with the British Embassy donation of the video and printing equipment. Two representatives of the NGO, Keik and Okara, went to Karaganda (Kazakhstan) to learn about basics of video journalism and film making.

Counterpart assisted Youth Union community in writing a project proposal for opening a Resource Center in the town. The British Embassy approved the proposal and provided office equipment and furniture for the activities of the Esenguly Resource Center.

#### EPD Project, Pragma

Two trainings, *Financial Analysis* and *Business Plan Development*, for Counterpart staff and NGOs were organized. Close cooperation was established in providing technical assistance for local NGOs. The capacity building activities and joint financing of NGO Accountant of Turkmenistan and the Counterpart Institutional Grantee project were also delivered.

#### The World Bank

The World Bank administered the Small Grants Program aimed at supporting NGO and community initiatives. The announcements for communities were distributed through the Counterpart network of CSSCs and RCs. Counterpart assisted the World Bank office to disseminate the information about the Youth Summer Camp in Almaty, Kazakhstan, held in August 2006. Counterpart, on the World Bank's offer, established contacts with Esenguly town activists and was able to identify three communities in this remote Caspian coast region. Subsequently these communities participated in Counterpart's CAG program. Counterpart and the World Bank also collaborated in the exchange of information and methodology.

#### UNDP

Counterpart and UNDP exchanged information and technical expertise. The Community Development Forum was held under the UNDP umbrella. UNDP specialists participated in Counterpart's Grant Review Committees and Tender Commission.