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COVER PHOTO: LRP-supported conference “Collaboration between Government and Civil Society in Legal Reforms”, May 21-22, 2021/Photo credit: LRP
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR  Alternative Dispute Resolution  
BIT  Bilateral Investment Treaty  
CISC  Civic Initiatives Support Center  
DSC  Development Strategy Center  
GPO  General Prosecutor's Office  
GOU  Government of Uzbekistan  
HSJ  Higher School of Judges  
IPA  Intellectual Property Agency  
LRP  Legal Reform Program  
LL.M.  Master of Laws (academic degree)  
LPRI  Legislation and Parliamentary Research Institute under the Oliy Majlis  
LTC  Lawyers' Training Center  
NGO  Non-Governmental Organization  
MFA  Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MIFT  Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade  
MOJ  Ministry of Justice  
NDL  National Database of Legislation  
RFA  Request for Applications  
RIA  Regulatory Impact Assessments  
TOT  Training of Trainers  
TLS  Technical Law School  
TSUL  Tashkent State University of Law  
UN  United Nations  
UNCITRAL  United Nations Commission on International Trade Law  
USAID  United States Agency for International Development  
UWED  University of World Economy and Diplomacy  
WIPO  World Intellectual Property Organization
I. INTRODUCTION

This Quarterly Report for the Legal Reform Program (LRP) is devoted to the programmatic tasks completed from April 1 to June 30, 2021, undertaken to advance the results required under the Tetra Tech DPK (Tt DPK) contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Project activities focused on supporting the efforts of Uzbekistan to develop its legal framework, enhance the legal profession, and improve the legal operating environment for non-governmental and civil society organizations working in the country. The report is organized by key objectives that include activities cross-referenced to the applicable sections in the Task Order Scope of Work.

II. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Comprehensive reforms in Uzbekistan of the past five years are generally attributed to the Action Strategy for 2017-2021, which is considered to be the foundation for modernization of the legal framework and economic and social change. The Government of Uzbekistan’s (GOU) wide-ranging initiatives seek to secure economic growth, embed the rule of law and improve the social environment. Although the period of the Strategy is coming to an end, it will continue to propel reforms over the coming years. Significant reforms have taken effect and others are underway in the areas of state administration, liberalization of the economy, social development and foreign policy and national security. Uzbekistan’s economy has transformed quickly and continues to move towards openness and innovation. The government is determined to remove all kinds of barriers to business and investment. Liberalization of entrepreneurial activity and dialogue with business have become priorities, and the GOU is taking action to transfer the finance system (bank assets) to private investors, develop public-private partnerships and project financing, digitalize public services, develop the labor market, decrease transactional costs and others.

Presidential decrees and resolutions establishing policy priorities continue to be the main driving force for the reforms. During this reporting period, the GOU issued the following policy documents that impact LRP’s work:

- April 6 - Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on “Additional Measures for Further Improvement of the System of Training of Legal Staff in Accordance with International Standards”. This resolution assigns the following additional tasks to the Center of Professional Training of Legal Personnel under TSUL:
  - teacher (re-)training for instruction on law in special secondary and vocational schools;
  - training of mediators; and,
  - short-term training courses for students on intellectual property rights.
• April 20 - New revision of the Law on “Legal Acts”, relating to legal and technical requirements to draft legal acts and the associated informational and analytical materials.

• May 19 - Presidential Resolution on “Additional Rehabilitation Measures for Women Affected by Violence”.

• May 28 - “Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” provides for a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the principle of equality among women and men in all spheres and on all levels of decision-making.

• June 2 - Presidential Decree on “Cardinal Improvement of Public Administration in the Field of Technical Regulation.” This decree is aimed at the adaptation of technical regulations, standardization, certification and metrology to international standards. According to the decree, the Uzbek Agency for Standardization, Metrology and Certification is transformed into the Uzbek Agency for Technical Regulation under the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade.

• June 26 – Presidential Resolution on “Additional Measures to Improve the System for Detecting and Preventing Cases of Torture.” The resolution defines the priority tasks to increase the efficiency of the system for detecting and preventing cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

• June 29 – Presidential Resolution on “Measures to Further Enhance Legal Services Rendered to State Bodies and Organizations” creates legal services centers under the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in every city of Uzbekistan. These centers will render services to state bodies, train their employees, represent their interests and ensure legality of decisions made by these bodies.
III. SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

During this reporting period LRP’s team leveraged existing relationships with the GOU, international donors, and civil society partners to carry out the LRP activities planned for this quarter, as summarized below.

GENDER

During the third quarter, LRP trained 343 government officials and representatives of local governments by providing 13 events on implementation of gender legislation and prevention of gender-based violence in six regions of Uzbekistan. Participants improved their knowledge and skills on gender focus in planning and reporting in their work and prevention of GBV. The trained officials are further disseminating received knowledge among their colleagues.

Successful Collaboration among Mahallas and LRP Grant Recipients Serves to Combat Gender-Based Violence

LRP joined the efforts of mahallas and LRP grant recipients of the Namangan, Andijan, Djizak, Syrdarya and Surkhandarya regions in promoting gender equality and protecting victims of gender-based violence. This was an extraordinary effort of coordination to bring together public institutions and civil society for the collective improvement of Uzbek society. National partners indicated that the training and awareness raising events organized by LRP had a significant impact on changing public opinion and overcoming gender stereotypes among decision-makers.

Government Officials Promote Gender Equality Law

With LRP support, the capacity of 158 government officials from Fergana, Namangan, Samarkand, Bukhara and Termez to implement gender legislation within the framework of their professional duties was enhanced through training. The trained officials are already actively promoting the Gender Law in their respective organizations.
Lawmakers Develop Gender-Sensitive Laws with Gender Budgeting

LRP organized capacity-building events for members of the Legislative Chamber of Parliament and local councils to stimulate inclusion of gender budgeting—into new legislation. Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process, involving conducting a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men.

**OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORTING RULE OF LAW DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN**

**The First Step in Development Entrepreneurship Code**

LRP supported an orientation workshop for Ministry of Justice staff with participation of other interested organizations. The main goal of the workshop was to discuss the concept and tentative content of the draft Entrepreneurship Code. During the meeting the participants proposed and discussed numerous possible additions to the content of the Code which will be reviewed and taken into account by the Ministry of Justice.

The GOU has made several attempts to develop the Code during the past several years, but the work on it started only in 2021. It will be a first Code of its kind which will contain codified business legislation as well as new provisions for the ease of use and stimulation of business activity.

**New Interactive Approach to Conducting Training Course**

LRP facilitated a five-day training course on intellectual property in a combined in-person/online format, allowing lawyers from outside Tashkent to participate. Intellectual property is an area of focus for the GOU, and trainings such as this one are major drivers of progress towards the government’s goals. This training was the first LRP training conducted by a tandem of an international expert and a local facilitator. The international expert noted that the approach was very effective, as the local facilitator was able to share his knowledge of real-life cases that took place in Uzbekistan, which made for interactive sessions that were much livelier than regular online training.

**OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION**

LRP supported legal professionals by strengthening capacity of lawyers in the NGO Madad, technical and regional law schools, the Ombudsman’s Office and the Chamber of Advocates. Trainings and equipment provided for these entities are having an immediate impact on legal services provision and shaping the legal standards in Uzbekistan for future generations.
LRP also provided judicial ethics training for judges. Ethics trainings are making judges confident in their ability to make fair and adequate judgements in accordance with the law.

**Strengthening Capacity of the NGO Madad to Provide Legal Aid**

LRP has continued its support to the NGO Madad by conducting a series of training courses for Madad’s regional legal consultants. The interactive, practice-oriented courses were designed and presented by national legal subject matter specialists and made a significant contribution to the professional skills and knowledge of the participants. LRP’s training series were directly delivered to 58 Madad’s legal consultants from every region of Uzbekistan.

**Building Capacity of Technical and Regional Law Schools**

The expansion of capacity in the legal profession in Uzbekistan beyond the country’s major urban centers (mainly Tashkent) is an essential component to ensuring comprehensive access to justice. To address the existing lack of resources and capacity, LRP continues to support the professional development of professors of the technical and regional law schools. The trainings include topics ranging from interactive approaches to teaching law to best practices in human rights, the Law on Public Control, and intellectual property rights. Most are carried out online due to the pandemic; however, LRP was able to facilitate a training course in-person on “New Research Methods” for the regional law schools in Termez, Samarkand, Namangan, and Nukus. Both online and in-person, the participants are very eager and willing to share teaching experiences and discuss methods of incorporating their new knowledge and skills into their approach.

**LRP Empowers the Ombudsman’s Office**

LRP supported the Ombudsman’s Office by providing both equipment and training on the role of the Ombudsman in ensuring human rights, freedoms and the legitimate interests of citizens in the context of the ongoing legal, social and economic reforms. Members of the Commission on the Observance of Constitutional Rights and Freedoms, regional representatives of the Ombudsman, and members of the Secretariat of the Ombudsman’s Office attended the trainings. These are some of the key institutions for ensuring respect for human rights in Uzbekistan, and LRP’s trainings are informing their approach to fulfilling their mandates.

**Empowering the Chamber of Advocates**

LRP supported the Chamber of Advocate’s branch offices in 11 Regions and Karakalpakstan by procuring IT equipment for distance learning, which allows the lawyers to communicate instantly with other members of the legal community throughout the Republic of Uzbekistan. This new ability will reduce the need for travel resources and time that advocates are often required to dedicate to attend trainings. The equipment
also allows advocates to communicate on ongoing cases and make referrals, thereby improving their services to clients.

**Judicial Ethics Education for Judges in Andijan and Namangan**

LRP has supported seminars for 50 judges in Andijan and Namangan on the “Practical Guide to Judicial Ethics: A Manual for Judges, Professional Responsibilities and Duties of Judges.” The seminars dealt with the most common ethical issues that confront judges in their professional life as well as with effective communication strategies for interactions with litigants. Results of tests administered before and after the seminar showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 28 percent.

**OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS**

LRP’s support for the legal enabling environment for civil society and NGOs has a significant person-to-person impact in the country’s most vulnerable populations. The approach of supporting locally-led assistance efforts through NGOs has produced meaningful results, both in terms of output and sustainable capacity development for the NGOs themselves. LRP grantees are seeing an intense increase quarter-to-quarter in the number of instances of legal aid provision and participation in awareness raising events and other grantee-led activities. Through trainings provided by LRP and the experience gained from implementing LRP grant awards, grantees are growing more confident and effective, and they are gaining the trust of the general population. During the reporting period, LRP continued to support the enabling environment for civil society engagement by promoting dialogue among state organizations, legislators, and civil society institutions to develop tools and mechanisms for ensuring access to justice for all.

**Supporting Collaboration on Legal Reform**

LRP organized a national conference entitled, “Collaboration between Government and Civil Society on Legal Reform”. The conference served as a platform to discuss national legislation and legislative initiatives focused on the development of an enabling environment for civil society in Uzbekistan and civil society participation in the legislative process. The conference bought together state and civil society representatives to exchange experiences and perspectives, laying the groundwork for a common vision and a way forward.

**Collaboration between Government and Civil Society to Provide Legal Aid to Vulnerable Citizens**

LRP organized a roundtable on the collaboration between government and civil society for the provision of free legal aid to vulnerable populations. The roundtable was a first step in implementing the recommendations developed during the National Conference
(see previous paragraph) and brought together representatives of the main actors: Ministry of Justice, Ombudsman’s Office, Chamber of Advocates, NGO Madad, and other civil society organizations. The roundtable concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the Ombudsman’s Office, the Chamber of Advocates, and Madad. This is the first ever memorandum signed by the three key players in this area. A previous MoC was signed in 2016 by only the Ombudsman’s Office and the Chamber of Advocates.

Grants Program

LRP has continued to support the work of its grant-recipient NGOs engaged in providing free legal aid to vulnerable citizens. Since the start of the grants program, grantees have provided free legal aid to over 38,000 beneficiaries and raised public awareness in campaigns reaching over 40,000 people in 12 out of Uzbekistan’s 14 Regions. During the reporting period LRP grantees have:

- provided free legal aid to 14,733 beneficiaries from vulnerable populations in Tashkent city, and in the Nukus, Andijan, Khorezm, Fergana, Bukhara, Termez, Karshi, Namangan, Jizzakh, Samarkand and Tashkent Regions.
- provided information on a variety of legal issues to 16,621 people who attended awareness-raising events in Tashkent city, and in the Nukus, Andijan, Khorezm, Fergana, Bukhara, Termez, Karshi, Namangan, Jizzakh, Samarkand and Tashkent Regions.
- published and distributed 22,659 copies of informational materials (leaflets, brochures, booklets) on protection of the rights of vulnerable citizens.

IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

GENDER

Enhancing Capacity of Government Officials Responsible for Guaranteeing Gender Equality

LRP continues to support training courses for local government officials in all Regions of Uzbekistan in the area of equal rights protection. During the reporting period, two-day training events were held focused on enhancing the legal knowledge of a total of 158 officials in Fergana, Namangan, Samarkand, Bukhara and Termez. Tests administered before and after the training showed a 35 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge of the issues.

Participants discussing gender equality in Bukhara
“I was convinced that gender equality was something that limited itself to national-level politics and did not realize that every civil servant can influence the process of preventing gender-based violence. Now my legal literacy and skills have improved, and I feel it is my responsibility to promote gender equality in my organization and use the knowledge and skills I obtained through this course in my further work.” - Shakhnoza Safarova, Inspector for Women’s Issues of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs, Bukhara.

Enhancing Capacity of Ministry of Mahalla and Family to Promote Gender Equality

LRP continued to support nationwide training courses for staff of the regional offices of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family. One hundred and twenty-four (124) people from the Namangan, Andijan, Bukhara, Syrdarya, Jizzakh and Surkhandarya Regions took part in gender training events and improved their skills in the prevention of gender-based violence and representation of the interests of victims in pre-trial and judicial proceedings. Tests administered before and after the training events showed a 33 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge.

“Even though I am already a practicing NGO lawyer and provide legal assistance to women in difficult situations, participation in the training helped me to become more attuned to women’s problems and therefore more responsive to their requests for legal aid. I feel better able to fight the gender stereotypes that lead women to tolerate domestic violence.” – Kamil Sharipov, lawyer at the NGO “Barkaror Hayot”, Surkhandarya Region.

Gender-Sensitive Approaches to Lawmaking and Budgeting

During the reporting period, LRP conducted two training courses for members of the Legislative Chamber of Parliament and local councils (kengashes). The 61 participants expanded their knowledge of and ability to use a gender approach in lawmaking and budgeting to eliminate gender inequality. The results of short tests administered before
and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics covered by the training course increased by 30 percent.

“As a woman MP and an Uzbek mother, I am very concerned about reports of women who suffer both mentally and physically through acts of gender discrimination. These realities remind us that we have a lot of work to do to increase the legal protection and well as the legal literacy of women in society. As one of the participants of the training seminar, I can say that it allowed us to assess our options to contribute to the improvement of the legal framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights in Uzbekistan.” - Gulruh Agzamova, Member of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis.

Awareness-Raising through Online Videos

During the reporting period, LRP produced two new short educational videos related to the issuance of Protection Orders (restraining orders). The videos, both in Uzbek and Russian, are posted on a Telegram channel and can be viewed not only by the target audience of LRP, but also by gender specialists and consultants from other organizations. To date, more than 1,600 people have watched the new videos.
OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORTING RULE OF LAW DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

REFORMING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Business Regulations to be Codified

In accordance with the National Strategy on Human Rights (Presidential Decree of June 22, 2020), the MOJ has started working on an Entrepreneurship Code, which is expected to be submitted for public discussion in September 2021. On June 14, 2021, LRP supported a workshop on the draft Entrepreneurship Code, organized by the MOJ.

Representatives of interested state bodies (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, State Tax Committee, Business Ombudsman’s Office, Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, etc.) and academia (TSUL, State Administration Academy) attended the conference to discuss the concept and tentative content of the draft Code. The participants expressed their views and proposed numerous additions to the content of the Code, which the MOJ considered relevant. LRP plans to continue to support the MOJ throughout the further development of the Code. As a first step, LRP will engage an international expert to provide recommendations on best practices in developing similar legislation.

Administrative Justice Reform

Despite the creation and subsequent reform of administrative courts, Uzbekistan has yet to achieve a capable administrative judiciary. Due to significant shortcomings of the Code of Administrative Procedure, as well as general institutional weaknesses of the judicial system and very poor training of judges in administrative courts, the decisions of administrative courts are often of questionable quality, and the courts are often not able to ensure the execution of their decisions. The courts do not enjoy the confidence of citizens, which is apparent from the low number of citizens who turn to these courts.

At the same time, foreign experience shows that pre-trial procedures can often effectively resolve administrative disputes and obviate the need to bring the cases to court. The US and France have considerable experience in organizing a system of pre-trial (and out-of-
court) resolution of administrative disputes. LRP will support the MOJ and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) in developing a research/policy paper to be submitted to the Administration of the President. The research will explore the possibility of such a pre-trial administrative justice system for Uzbekistan, including drafts of the regulatory acts necessary to implement it. To this end, LRP has developed a Scope of Work for international and national experts, which is currently being discussed by national partners.

MINISTRY OF INVESTMENTS AND FOREIGN TRADE

Training on International Investment Law and BITs

Between April 26 and May 6, 2021 LRP, in cooperation with the Uzbek Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT), hosted an online intensive training for the Ministry’s staff who deal with foreign trade, investments, and international law developments. MIFT is responsible for concluding bilateral and multilateral treaties with other countries, in particular bilateral investment treaties and free trade treaties, which are pursued and concluded increasingly often by the GOU in line with its goal to promote economic development. The training included a look at economic models of growth and investment, exploring the latest research on international investment and investment treaties, and case studies of other emerging markets and their experiences with international investment treaties.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 31 percent.

ANTI-MONOPOLY COMMITTEE

Strengthening the Legal Framework for Competition

On July 6, 2020, the President of Uzbekistan signed a decree on “Additional Measures for Further Development of a Competitive Environment and Reduction of State Intervention in the Economy”. The Anti-Monopoly Committee of Uzbekistan (the Committee) now reports to the Senate of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan and not to the executive branch of the GOU. Also, the decree aims to stimulate competition in commodity and financial markets, create fair and equal conditions for the activities of business entities, and ensure transparency and further improvement of public procurement procedures. In the furtherance of these aims, the Committee has rewritten the existing Law on Competition and requested LRP’s help in reviewing this new version of the law. To this end, LRP has engaged an international expert who is expected to deliver a report and recommendations in early July 2021.
CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES

Training on Intellectual Property Rights in Uzbekistan

From June 21-25, 2021, LRP, in cooperation with the Chamber of Advocates, organized a training on intellectual property rights for legal professionals who have little or no practical knowledge of the subject. LRP and the CoA carried out the five-day training in a combined in-person/online format. Participants acquired conceptual as well as practical knowledge and had a chance to exchange ideas on various IP cases (local, international/WTO). LRP engaged a tandem an international and a local expert to conduct the training so participants received practical insights both from an international and a local perspective. The participants noted that this approach added a lot of value to the training. Tests administered before and after the training showed a 21 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JUSTICE SECTOR PERSONNEL AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

ACADEMY OF THE GENERAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE

Development of an Online Legal Clinic

The Legal Clinic of the GPO Academy was created with LRP support in 2019. It serves as a useful tool, not just to improve access to justice for citizens, but also for academic research. An online version of the Legal Clinic will expand its reach and provide access to free legal advice for those unable to travel. During the reporting period, LRP supported development of the IT specifications and design of the online Legal Clinic. LRP plans to support the launch of the online Legal Clinic in the next quarter.

Strengthening GPO Academy’s Technical Capacity

LRP continues to support the improvement of the technical capacity of the GPO Academy. Upon request by the Academy, LRP purchased IT equipment for its project management office.
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Training on Treaty Law for Legal Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

LRP supported an online training course on treaty law for the legal staff of the Treaty Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Participants from UWED as well as from the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Trade also attended. The course significantly enhanced the participants’ knowledge and skills in analyzing treaties and understanding their implications in practice.

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF LAWYERS BY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS UNDER TSUL

Course on Mediation under Development

In accordance with the Presidential Decree on “Additional Measures to Radically Improve Legal Education and Science in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” adopted on April 29, 2020, a new Mediation Center was established under Tashkent State University of Law (TSUL). The Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL is tasked with the development of a course to train the mediators who will work in this new Mediation Center and who will, in turn, contribute to training new mediators. In support of this effort, LRP engaged an international expert, who, in consultation with national partners and under LRP supervision, has developed a 45-hour training course for the mediators. The international expert will also conduct a complementary training-of-trainers course and a pilot mediation course next quarter.

Building Technical Capacity for Distance Teaching

LRP continues to support capacity building for distance learning and teaching. This quarter LRP purchased and donated a powerful pc and a multifunctional printer for teachers and staff of the Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards. The equipment will help them to develop new teaching materials and set up an online assessment system.
HIGHER SCHOOL OF JUDGES

Judicial Ethics for Judges

During the reporting period, LRP organized two one-day seminars, entitled “Practical Guide to Judicial Ethics: A Manual for Judges, Professional Responsibilities and Duties of Judges,” for judges of criminal, civil and economic courts in Andijan and Namangan. LRP engaged an international expert to develop the seminar, which covers the most significant ethical issues that confront judges in their professional life. It also includes training on communicating effectively with litigants.

“The interactive workshop was particularly useful, providing examples of international standards and practices. During the workshop we also discussed the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct and the Uzbek Code of Judicial Ethics.” – Ms. Mukaddas Komilova, Judge of the Andijan Region Civil Court, Andijan Region.

The results of tests administered before and after the seminar in Andijan and Namangan showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 28 percent.

CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES

Online Training Courses for Young Advocates

On May 10, LRP and the Chamber of Advocates supported a training event for young legal professionals on preparation of legal documents in civil cases. The one-day training provided participants with knowledge about general guidelines for drafting non-procedural (contracts, legal opinions, and memorandums) and procedural documents (statements of claim, objections to statements of claim, petitions, lawyer’s requests, and complaints).

“The interactive training, led by the Chamber’s most experienced professionals, enabled me to master vital skills and
gain a lot of confidence in civil procedures. “ – Ravshan Nazarov, Director of the Law Firm "Adolat Sari".

Tests administered before and after the training showed a 23 percent improvement in participants' knowledge.

**Enabling the Chamber to Communicate Nationwide**

Earlier this year, the Chamber of Advocates approached LRP with a request to support distance learning education in the Regions of Uzbekistan. In response, LRP procured Distance Learning Technology (DLT) equipment for branch offices of the Chamber of Advocates in 11 regions and Karakalpakstan. The DLT equipment allows the Chamber’s lawyers to communicate instantly with their colleagues throughout Uzbekistan, which is especially useful in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and it also saves on travel costs to Tashkent, where the main office of the Chamber of Advocates is located. Saving on travel costs and time is a major factor for some advocates, as some are not able to travel for trainings because of scheduled court appearances on behalf of clients, while others have to exchange travel time for time spent representing clients or working with them on their cases.

**OMBUDSMAN’S OFFICE**

**Empowering the Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman receives a significant number of appeals from individuals and legal entities (see Graph I). During the reporting period, LRP supported the Ombudsman’s Secretariat by procuring one server, three computers and three scanners. This equipment makes it possible for the Ombudsman’s Secretariat’s staff to communicate directly with citizens throughout Uzbekistan – particularly those who don’t have the resources to travel to Tashkent – and to provide a quick response to their enquiries or requests for assistance.

![Graph 1](image)

*Blue line— applications from individuals and legal entities. Orange line— online applications.*
Empowering the Ombudsman to Protect Human Rights and Freedoms

On May 24 and 25, LRP supported a training course in Tashkent on the role of the Ombudsman in ensuring the human rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens in the context of the ongoing reforms. Participants included members of the Commission on the Observance of Constitutional Rights and Freedoms, Regional representatives of the Ombudsman, and members of the Secretariat of the Ombudsman's Office. The training covered topics including monitoring of the observance of human rights; preparation of awareness-raising and informational materials; and interaction of the Ombudsman with other state bodies (including law enforcement and the judiciary), representatives of civil society, and mass media.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 49 percent.

NGO MADAD

Developing Capacity of Madad’s Regional Bureaus

LRP continues to support Madad in developing the capacity of the NGOs’ legal consultants to provide legal advice to citizens in a professional and effective manner. This quarter LRP conducted a series of training courses designed to hone the lawyers’ consultation skills. The courses covered such areas as labor relations, the legal aspects of the seizure of land and demolition of buildings belonging to individuals and legal entities, legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, and issues obtaining state support for low-income families. LRP engaged specific experts in each training topic to develop the trainings.

“These training courses are very valuable for our lawyers because they allow them to discuss their real-life cases and any difficulties they have encountered, such as seemingly conflicting legal regulations, with experts. The courses will of course ultimately greatly benefit the citizens that come to us for free legal aid.” – Tulkin Tursunov, Madad’s executive director.
Tests administered before and after the training showed a 27 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge.

**LEGAL EDUCATION**

**TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY OF LAW**

**Making International Legal Knowledge Accessible to Uzbek Students**

TSUL is consistently adapting its curriculum to international standards and updating its courses. In that framework, TSUL requested LRP assistance in developing new courses on International Investment Law and International Private Law in English. LRP engaged an international expert to develop these two new courses, which are based on current standards and best practices. In the fall of 2021, the courses will be incorporated into the third-year undergraduate curriculum.

**Two New Research Projects**

LRP continued to support TSUL in conducting research requested by the GOU. This quarter LRP agreed to support two new research projects in the subsequent reporting period:

1. Research material will be prepared on the Hague Principles on Choice of Law in International Commercial Contracts, how they are applied, whether it is necessary or useful to accede to these principles in every case, whether national legislation needs to be amended.

2. Research material will be prepared on the expediency of accession to/ratification of the Hague Choice of Court Convention\(^1\) as well as the Hague Judgments Convention\(^2\), on the mechanisms of their implementation, foreign experience of their application and whether national legislation needs to be amended.

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\(^1\) The Hague Choice of Court Convention, formally the Convention of 30 June 2005 on Choice of Court Agreements, is an international treaty concluded within the Hague Conference on Private International Law. It was concluded in 2005, and entered into force on 1 October 2015.

\(^2\) The Hague Judgments Convention, formally the Convention of 2 July 2019 on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil or Commercial Matters is an international treaty concluded within the Hague Conference on Private International Law. It was concluded in 2019, and has not entered into force.
UNIVERSITY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND DIPLOMACY

Bringing Teaching up to International Standards

UWED faced difficulties switching to online teaching methods. Online education demands special skills from the teachers, who struggled learning how to replace regular in-person lectures with interactive and engaging online lessons. Students and teachers alike also faced difficulties in utilizing platforms for online assignments.

UWED requested LRP’s assistance to improve the capacity of 20 lecturers in best international practices – including teaching methods, assignments, and lesson plans – for online teaching. In response, LRP organized an online course entitled, “How to Create Online Courses”, developed by an international expert. Tests administered before and after the training showed a 53 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge about interactive teaching methods.

Concurrently, LRP also organized an online course entitled, “How to Create Case Study Materials”. Tests administered before and after the training showed a 36 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge about creating case study materials.

TECHNICAL LAW SCHOOLS AND REGIONAL LAW SCHOOLS

Building Capacity of New Regional and Technical Law Schools

In response to a request by the Technical Law Schools, LRP supported the development of online courses on various subjects such as “Best International Practices on Human Rights,” and “Intellectual Property Rights and Digital Technologies” for the Technical Law Schools and the Regional Law Schools (Termez, Samarkand, Namangan, and Nukus). The training materials and videos will be uploaded to the schools’ common server, provided by LRP earlier this year, and this resource will be available to their students.

First in-person training in Tashkent for Regional Law Schools

On June 21 and 22, LRP supported an in-person training for 19 lecturers from the Regional Law Schools (Termez, Samarkand, Namangan and Nukus) and TSUL entitled, “Innovations in Legal Research Methods: Scientific and Practical Skills in Research Activities.” The training enabled the participants to share experiences and discuss ways to incorporate their new knowledge and skills into their lessons.
“The training enabled me to learn about international best practices in conducting legal research, and I learned skills which I can directly apply in my work.” - Elizaveta Kutybaeva, Dean of Law Faculty of Karakalpak State University.

Tests administered before and after the training showed a 28 percent improvement in participants’ knowledge about the research methods.

**OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS**

**Civil Society Participation in Social Partnership**

On April 21, LRP supported a roundtable in Fergana on “Implementation of the Law on Social Partnership.” Representatives of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Development Strategy Center, and several NGOs took part. The participants agreed that the implementation of the Law, adopted in 2018, still faces challenges because of a lack of awareness and knowledge among both NGOs and governmental institutions about its implications and ramifications. For instance, Article 7 of the Law determines that civil society organizations have the right to submit initiatives and legal proposals to state bodies, while Article 26 determines that those state bodies are obliged to take the same into consideration. Improving the quality of governance in Uzbekistan is impossible without an active and meaningful contribution of civil society actors in developing new legislation and addressing violations of the rule of law.

“To make the Law on Social Partnership work, it is necessary to raise awareness among government officials that NGOs are a powerful resource in addressing and solving social issues and that cooperation with them is of vital importance and, indeed, required by law” – Adiba Akhmedjanova, chairperson of the NGO “Association of Women from the Agricultural Sphere”.

The roundtable allowed the participants to develop joint recommendations on overcoming existing impediments to implement the Law and enhance civil society’s participation in the ongoing legal reforms in the country.
Empowering Civil Society

In April, LRP supported a roundtable in Nukus on “Enhancing NGO’s Participation in Public Control.” The roundtable served as a platform to discuss civil society and NGO participation in the ongoing legal reforms. Around 30 participants, including representatives of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family, Ministry of Justice, NGO Madad, NGO Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR), and other NGOs, took part. The participants discussed the government’s paper, “Concept of Civil Society Development for 2021-2025,” which pays special attention to citizen participation in public administration. The participants also discussed the implementation guidelines, developed by IDHR, for the Law on Public Control, adopted in 2018, which aims to promote and protect citizen participation in the management of state and public affairs. The roundtable saw a lively discussion of the subjects.

Modern Approaches to Providing Legal Aid to Vulnerable Groups

In April, LRP supported a training entitled, “Mediation as an Alternative Way of Dispute Resolution” for staff of its NGO partners who are providing free legal aid to vulnerable citizens. The training had been requested by the NGOs themselves. The interactive training has helped the NGOs to expand the range of services they can offer and enables them to be more responsive to the needs of the groups they serve.

“Practice shows that compromise is the best solution in many cases, including family and property ownership disputes. The mediation skills we acquired during this training improved our ability to serve our clients’ needs.” – Azamat Karimov, lawyer at the NGO “Yuksak Salohiyat”, Tashkent.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 34 percent.
Supporting Development of Civil Society in Uzbekistan
On May 21 and 22, LRP conducted the National Conference, “Collaboration between Government and Civil Society on Legal Reform.” The event brought together more than 80 representatives from the Uzbek Parliament, other governmental bodies and civil society organizations. The conference served as a platform to discuss national legislation, legislative initiatives focused on development of an enabling environment for civil society in Uzbekistan, and enhancing civil society’s participation in the legislative process. The event gave the participants the opportunity to collaborate in developing recommendations for greater participation of civil society organizations in the areas of social partnership, citizen oversight of administrative and other state bodies, and volunteerism.

“Further sustainable development of Uzbekistan requires active civil society participation in lawmaking and implementation processes to achieve the economic, social, environmental and other goals pursued by the country. This event strengthens the dialogue between the legislators, the government and NGOs, improves mutual trust, and creates an opportunity to work together to develop meaningful proposals and recommendations.” – Shukhrat Bavoev, Chairman of the Committee for Democratic Institutions and NGOs of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis.
Collaboration between Government and Civil Society in Providing Legal Aid to Vulnerable Groups

On June 28 and 29, LRP organized a roundtable on the collaboration of government and civil society in the area of providing free legal aid to vulnerable citizens. The roundtable was a first step in implementing the recommendations developed during the National Conference, held on May 21-22 (see previous paragraph), and brought together representatives of the main actors: Ministry of Justice, Ombudsman’s Office, Chamber of Advocates, NGO Madad, and other civil society organizations. The participants exchanged their experiences in providing free legal aid and discussed the mechanisms of interaction and referrals between the different institutions. The participants acknowledged the lack of coordination among providers of free legal aid as the major impediment to its effective, full-scale implementation across the country. The roundtable concluded with signing a Memorandum of Cooperation among the Ombudsman’s Office, the Chamber of Advocates, and Madad.

“Signing this memorandum has been a major breakthrough in coordinating and integrating the efforts of the main actors. It will form the basis of an active partnership between government and civil society and is expected to contribute greatly to improving the access to justice for every citizen.” - Saidbek Azimov, Head of Secretariat of the Ombudsman’s Office.

IMPLEMENTING LOCALLY LED GRANTS

During the reporting period, eight grant-recipient NGOs from the first Request for Applications (RFA 2019), and nine from the second Request for Applications (RFA 2020) continued implementation of their respective projects. LRP also signed a grant agreement with one more NGO from RFA 2020, which has since started implementing its proposed activities as well.

The grantees provided free legal aid to vulnerable citizens (including women, victims of domestic violence, low-income families, and people with disabilities). Legal aid tended to focus on matters of domestic violence, family and property disputes, labor code violations, employment, slander, and migration. The grantees also helped their clients in searching for subsidized housing, securing financial support, and finding solutions to problems with
regard to subsidies, alimony, and pensions. They also raised citizens’ awareness of their own legal rights and the legal obligations of governmental institutions.

To improve collaboration among the grantees and local government counterparts and facilitate the distribution of information about the availability of legal services for victims of gender-based violence, LRP shared the contact information of the relevant grantees’ legal clinics/experts with the Gender Commission (a governmental body), as well as with the Ministry of Mahalla and Family.

The grantees’ activities are summarized in the sections below. By the close of the reporting period, the grantees had undertaken the following activities:

• Provided free legal aid to 14,733 beneficiaries from vulnerable populations in Tashkent city, Nukus, Andijan, Khorezm, Fergana, Bukhara, Termez, Karshi, Namangan, Jizzakh, Samarkand and Tashkent Regions.
• Provided information on a variety of legal issues to 16,621 people who attended awareness-raising events in Tashkent city, and in the Nukus, Andijan, Khorezm, Fergana, Bukhara, Termez, Karshi, Namangan, Jizzakh, Samarkand and Tashkent Regions.
• Published and distributed 22,659 copies of informational materials (leaflets, brochures, booklets) on legal issues related to the protection of rights of vulnerable groups.

OYDIN NUR, BUKHARA

Joining Forces to Address Domestic Violence

Oydin Nur’s grant project focuses on providing legal aid to victims of domestic violence in Bukhara. Activities are being implemented under three objectives:

(1) Improve the capacity of the Bukhara Chamber of Advocates’ lawyers to provide free legal assistance to domestic violence victims.
(2) Protect the rights of victims of domestic violence in the city of Bukhara and three Districts of the Bukhara Region.
(3) Raise awareness of domestic violence issues among the citizens of the Bukhara Region.

This quarter, the grantee provided free legal advice to 788 citizens, reached 546 citizens in awareness-raising events held in local communities across the Bukhara Region and temporarily housed 30 women and children in its shelter. Oydin Nur also distributed 1,000 copies of a brochure during awareness-raising events.

Impact of Oydin Nur’s work

Sanobar, a beneficiary of Oydin Nur’s services, had a conflict with her husband. He kicked her out onto the street and did not let her see their three underage children anymore. Every day when he left for work, the three children, the youngest a mere 3 years old, would be left in the care of his sister or sometimes totally unattended. After several weeks
of not being allowed to see her children, desperate Sanobar turned for help to Oydin Nur. The NGO’s lawyer studied the case, prepared the necessary documents and represented Sanobar before the District Court. As a result of her intervention, Sanobar’s husband was ordered to turn over two of the children to Sanobar.

BARQAROR HAYOT, TERMEZ

Legal Aid for Vulnerable Populations in the Surkhandarya Region

Barqaror Hayot focuses on the provision of free legal assistance to vulnerable populations in the Surkhandarya Region, which experiences a very high level of migration as it borders Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

This quarter, Barqaror Hayot provided free legal aid to 1,409 citizens and also reached 2,072 citizens through legal awareness-raising events held in local communities. The NGO distributed 336 copies of booklets on state support for people with disabilities, housing subsidies for low-income families, and restraining orders against abusers in domestic violence cases.

Impact of Barqaror Hayot’s work

Munisa’s ex-husband had been insulting her and spreading slander about her. She was too embarrassed to leave her home. She eventually learned that “Barqaror Hayot” provided free legal aid, and she approached the NGO with a request for help. The NGO’s lawyer prepared the necessary documents and submitted the issue to the ex-husband’s District’s office of the Department of Internal Affairs, which in turn sent the case to the District Court. As a result, the ex-husband was found guilty and fined for 669,000 sums (around $60). He now refrains from abusing his ex-wife. “My dignity has been restored; I can walk with my head held high again,” says Munisa.

ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD, TASHKENT

Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable People at Border Crossing Points

The grant to Istiqbolli Avlod focuses on preventing the negative consequences of illegal migration, human trafficking, and other forms of violence by raising public awareness of the issues and providing legal services to affected people. There are two objectives:

1) Establish four legal assistance centers in Tashkent to provide free legal aid to Uzbek labor migrants.
2) Increase the legal literacy of citizens residing in the Tashkent Region border areas to prevent illegal migration, human trafficking, and forced labor.
During the reporting period, Istiqbolli Avlod provided free legal counsel to 959 citizens and reached 1,649 citizens in awareness-raising events held in local communities across the Tashkent Region. The grantee distributed 1,700 booklets on how to prevent human trafficking, which include information on the availability of free legal assistance to victims.

**YUKSALISH, KARSHI**

**Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Populations in the Kashkadarya Region of Uzbekistan**

The NGO Yuksalish focuses on creating a network of free legal consultation centers for vulnerable populations in the Kashkadarya Region. The network provides information and services, including referrals to agencies specializing in the prevention of illegal migration and domestic violence.

This quarter, Yuksalish provided free legal assistance to 1,334 citizens and organized legal awareness-raising events in local communities that reached 986 citizens. The grantee continued distributing booklets on topics ranging from domestic violence and restraining orders to maternity leave, security of personal data, and the availability of free legal services in the Kashkadarya Region. The grantee distributed 1,875 copies of the booklet during the reporting period.

**CIVIC INITIATIVES SUPPORT CENTER, TASHKENT**

**Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Groups in the Andijan and Khorezm Regions**

The NGO Civic Initiatives Support Center’s (CISC) focuses on identifying impediments to the implementation of the Law on Social Partnership, adopted in 2014. No mechanism currently exists to ensure consistent and good-quality cooperation among governmental bodies and civil society. Through its LRP grant, CISC has been able to prepare proposals to amend the law. The project has two specific objectives:

1. Develop recommendations on amending the Law on Social Partnership in cooperation with the Development Strategy Center (DSC) and submit the recommendations to the government.
2. Provide free legal aid to vulnerable groups (migrants, women with disabilities, women with disabled children, and victims of domestic violence and human trafficking) and raise awareness of citizens’ legal rights among the population of the Andijan and Khorezm Regions.

This quarter CISC has provided free legal assistance to 804 beneficiaries and organized legal awareness-raising events in local communities in the Andijan and Khorezm Regions, reaching 760 citizens. CISC also distributed 2,050 copies of a brochure to citizens.
attending awareness-raising events and those visiting mahallas and regional and District khokimiyats.

**YUKSAK SALOHIYAT, TASHKENT**

**Partnerships to Ensure Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Populations**

Yuksak Salohiyat focuses on providing legal assistance to vulnerable people in the Yashnabad, Almazar, Chilanzar, Sergeli and Yunusabad districts of Tashkent and increasing their level of legal literacy. This quarter, Yuksak Salohiyat provided free legal aid to 862 citizens and developed and distributed 2,009 copies of booklets on domestic violence and national legislation relevant to the protection of vulnerable people’s rights. Through its awareness-raising work, the grantee reached 872 people.

**ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD, NUKUS, REPUBLIC OF KARAKALPAKSTAN**

**Legal Aid Services for Vulnerable People in Karakalpakstan**

The grant to Istiqbolli Avlod allows it to focus on providing legal assistance to vulnerable people in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and raising public awareness of citizens’ legal rights and the reforms that are being implemented by the government, especially in the areas of women’s rights, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and human rights.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 560 beneficiaries and organized legal awareness-raising events in local communities of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, reaching 635 citizens.

**MEHRJON, FERGANA**

**Legal Assistance to Vulnerable Groups in the Fergana Region**

Mehrjon focuses on providing free legal services to vulnerable groups in the Fergana Region, in particular to women with disabilities, women with disabled children, and victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. These individuals often have few opportunities to receive quality legal assistance and have low levels of awareness about their rights and the obligations of the institutions that are tasked with protecting them. The women and their children often live in rural communities where it is difficult to access services or even information following events of gender-based violence, family and/or property disputes, or any other legal issues involving basic human needs.

During the reporting period, Mehrjon provided legal aid to 1,100 people in the cities of Fergana, Kokand, Oltiariik, Yazyavan, Bagdad and Rishtan. They also carried out awareness raising events that reached 1,700 individuals who live in rural communities in the Fergana, Kokand, Oltiariik, Yazyavan, Bagdad and Rishtan Regions. The NGO distributed 950 booklets on domestic violence to people living in the Fergana Region.
YUKSAK SALOHIYAT, SAMARKAND

Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Populations in the Samarkand Region

Yuksak Salohiyat provides free legal assistance to vulnerable citizens in Samarkand city and two Districts of the Samarkand Region (Samarkand-Selskiy and Taylak) and raises awareness of their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,183 beneficiaries. In addition, the grantee has developed booklets with information on legal issues, 3,890 copies of which were distributed during awareness-raising events in mahallas. A total of 1,188 citizens participated in the awareness-raising meetings during the reporting period.

ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF UZBEKISTAN, TASHKENT REGION

Increased Availability of Legal Aid for Vulnerable Populations and Awareness-Raising in the Tashkent Region

The Association of Women of the Agricultural Sector of Uzbekistan focuses on providing free legal aid to vulnerable citizens including the unemployed, migrants, women who have experienced violence, and people with disabilities in the Akhangaran and Parkent Districts of the Tashkent Region. The NGO also endeavours to raise legal awareness among the population.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 606 beneficiaries and developed and distributed 1,263 copies of a publication entitled “Legal Questions and Answers,” containing relevant information on the protection of rights and the availability of legal aid services in the Tashkent Region. With its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 1,160 people.

Impact of the Association’s work

Aziza Komilova, a mother of three underage children, had completed secondary school and had also taken cooking and pastry courses. When she heard that the NGO “Association of Women of the Agricultural Sector of Uzbekistan” offered not only free legal support but also assistance in finding employment for women, she approached the NGO and requested help with finding a job so she might put her skills to use and contribute to her family’s financial security. Through their network, the NGO helped her to obtain a job at a local...
study center, where she is successfully teaching the cooking and baking course. “I am grateful for this career opportunity; I am both contributing to my family’s well-being and personally growing in confidence and professionally. Thank you!” – says Aziza.

MEHR KO’ZDA

Legal Services for People with Speech and Hearing Impairments

Mehr Ko’zda’s project is aimed at providing both remote and in-person legal aid to people with speech and/or hearing impairments. The grantee also works on developing recommendations for the improvement of current legislation regulating the protection of rights of the speech- and hearing-impaired.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,094 beneficiaries and distributed 1,500 booklets on the rights of speech- and hearing-impaired people and the availability of free legal services. The grantee also provided a two-month training course for 15 sign language interpreters who will assist people with speech and hearing impairments in need of legal services.

ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD, NAMANGAN

Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable Populations in the Namangan Region

Istiqbolli Avlod focuses on providing free legal aid to vulnerable people, including victims of human trafficking, migrants, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups in the Namangan Region. The NGO also conducts awareness-raising events on citizens’ rights, the availability of free legal aid, and the ongoing legal reforms in Uzbekistan. The NGO’s lawyers provide legal assistance and information to people that congregate at border-crossing points, Namangan International Airport, and the Agency for External Labor Migration. During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 578 beneficiaries. Through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 1,344 people and distributed 1,924 copies of information materials.

Impact of Istiqbolli Avlod, Namangan’s work

Nozimjon left to work in Novosibirsk, Russia as a labor migrant. After some time, his relatives in Namangan stopped hearing from him. His worried brother, Luqmonjon, turned to Istiqbolli Avlod for help. The NGO’s lawyer contacted the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Uzbek Consulate in Novosibirsk. As a result of the NGO’s efforts, the family found Nozimjon and was able to talk to him over the phone.

“When I heard my brother’s voice over the phone, I felt a great relief. Our family is very grateful for the help we received.” – says Luqmonjon.
ISHONCH VA HAYOT, TASHKENT

Human Rights and HIV/AIDS

Ishonch va Hayot focuses on providing free legal aid to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and on increasing public awareness among the general population of the issues faced by this vulnerable group with the aim to reduce and prevent stigma and discrimination.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 546 beneficiaries. Through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 668 people and distributed 1,000 copies of information materials.

Impact of Ishonch va Hayot’s work

Artyom is 14 years old and HIV-positive. He lost his mother when he was only two years old. At the time, his father remarried, and Artyom was given to an aunt to raise – his father would only appear occasionally. The fact that the father retained his legal parental rights however, meant that Artyom’s aunt had difficulties receiving the allowance that the state pays to HIV-positive children until they reach the age of 16. Collecting the allowance required the father’s help each time and this often caused delay. Artyom’s aunt finally decided to approach Ishonch va Hayot. The NGO’s lawyer proposed a solution which satisfied everybody: the aunt would apply for guardianship, but the father would retain his parental rights which he didn’t want to lose. Now the aunt is regularly receiving the boy’s allowance, and, in addition, a state allowance for guardianship.

RAHM'DILLIK, SAMARKAND

Legal Services for Vulnerable Women in the Samarkand Region

Rahmdillik focuses on protecting the rights of victims of domestic violence in Kattakurgan, and in the Postdargom, Samarkand, and Jamboy Districts of the Samarkand Region, as well as on raising awareness of domestic violence issues among the citizens in the Region. During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,043 beneficiaries and through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, reached 1,433 people and distributed 1,650 copies of information materials.

CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN JOURNALISM OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Legal Reforms in the Media and Journalism Sector of Uzbekistan

The Center for the Development of Modern Journalism of the Republic of Uzbekistan focuses on increasing journalists’ and bloggers’ capacity to provide quality coverage on the
legal reforms in Uzbekistan in general, the legal position of journalists and bloggers in particular, and to monitor cases related to violation of journalists’ rights.

The NGO provided legal assistance to 335 journalists and bloggers in matters related to their professional activities including guidance on how to identify misleading information, and on how to protect themselves from harassment. Ninety journalists and bloggers participated in a training aimed at increasing their aptitude to report on legal reforms in Uzbekistan.

**ISTIQLOL AVLODI, JIZZAKH**

**Improving Access to Legal Services for Vulnerable People in the Jizzakh Region**

Istiqlol Avlodi focuses on providing legal aid in four remote Districts of the Jizzakh Region (Gallaaral, Zamin, Zarbdor, and Dustlik) as well as in Jizzakh city, through in-person, online (Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook), and phone consultations. The grantee also conducts legal awareness-raising events for the general population as well as for representatives of partner organizations. During the awareness-raising events, information is given on employment, legal migration and acquiring official residence permits in destination countries, illegal migration and human trafficking, violations of human rights, and other relevant legal topics.

During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 1,099 beneficiaries and developed and distributed 1,512 booklets with information on legal issues and on the availability of legal aid services in the Jizzakh Region. Through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas, the grantee reached 1,512 citizens.

**Impact of Istiqlool Avlodi’s work**

As Zamira Urinova’s illness progressed, she lost her ability to walk. As a member of a low-income family, she was entitled to a free wheelchair. She tried to apply to different authorities on her own to no avail. Finally, she called the Istiqlool Avlodi. The NGO’s lawyer helped her write a strong, argument based appeal and sent it to the Region’s Social and Medical Services Department. As a result, Zamira’s received her free wheelchair within a week.

**YUKSAK SALOHIYAT, NUKUS**

**Increasing Access to Justice in the Republic of Karakalpakstan**

Yuksak Salohiyat, Nukus focuses on providing free legal aid to labor migrants and other vulnerable groups in the city of Nukus and the Kungrad District of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. They also focus on increasing the legal literacy of citizens residing in
Nukus and the Kungrad District in order to prevent illegal migration, human trafficking and forced labor. During the reporting period, the grantee provided free legal aid to 433 beneficiaries and reached 96 people through its awareness-raising activities in mahallas.

ASSOCIATION OF ARBITRATION COURTS OF UZBEKISTAN

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) for Improving Access to Justice

The NGO Association of Arbitration Courts of Uzbekistan’s project focuses on training arbitrors in remote areas of Uzbekistan and raising public awareness of ADR. Activities are being implemented under three objectives:

(1) Finalize a distance learning program on ADR in civil law disputes and deliver training courses to beneficiaries across the nation.

(2) Develop a training module for an in-person course and conduct training courses for beneficiaries in remote areas of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and the Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Navoi, Jizzakh, Bukhara, Samarkand, Fergana and Namangan Regions, where distance learning opportunities are not accessible.

(3) Raise public awareness on the role of ADR in improving access to justice as it may be used to resolve many conflicts in a less costly and time-consuming manner than through the courts without sacrificing legitimacy.

This quarter, the grantee finalized a web-based Moodle™ training course for arbitrators, which was taken by 109 beneficiaries.

SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL LAW ACTITIVITES

This section is added at the request of USAID to collate activities in the commercial law sphere and is duplicative of information found above.

ANTI-MONOPOLY COMMITTEE

Strengthening the legal framework for competition

On July 6, 2020 the President of Uzbekistan signed a Decree on “Additional Measures for Further Development of a Competitive Environment and Reduction of State Intervention in the Economy”. The Anti-Monopoly Committee of Uzbekistan (the Committee) now reports to the Senate of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan and not anymore to the executive branch of the GOU. Also, the decree aims to stimulate competition in commodity and financial markets, to create equal conditions for the activities of business entities, and to ensure transparency and further improvement of public procurement procedures. In the furtherance of these aims, the Committee has rewritten the existing
Law on Competition and requested LRP’s help in reviewing this new version of the law. To this end, LRP has engaged an international expert who is expected to deliver his report and recommendations in early July 2021.

**MINISTRY OF INVESTMENTS AND FOREIGN TRADE**

**Training on International Investment Law and BITs**

Between April 26 and May 6, 2021 LRP, in cooperation with the Uzbek Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT), hosted an online intensive training for the Ministry’s staff who deal with foreign trade, investments, and international law developments. MIFT is responsible for concluding bilateral and multilateral treaties with other countries, in particular bilateral investment treaties and free trade treaties, which are pursued and concluded increasingly often by the GOU in line with its dedication to promote overall economic development. The training included a look at economic models of growth and investment, exploring the latest research on international investment and investment treaties, and case studies of other emerging markets and their experiences with international investment treaties.

The results of tests administered before and after the training showed that participants’ knowledge of the topics increased by 31 percent.

**V. ANTICIPATED ACHIEVEMENTS IN Q4**

LRP plans to complete the following activities in the fourth quarter of 2021:

**Gender:**
- Handbook on gender equality from a legal, social, and cultural perspective for government bodies and state authorities in Russian and Uzbek published.
- Training for two more groups of MPs of the Legislative Chamber and Senate of Uzbekistan conducted.
- Two short videos on gender legislation developed.
- Training for government officials and staff of Ministry of Mahalla and Family Ministry in the remaining Regions of Uzbekistan on implementation of gender laws and prevention of gender-based violence organized.

**Objective 1 (Supporting Rule of Law Development in Uzbekistan):**
- Draft of the Entrepreneurship Code developed.
- Training for IPA on trademarks conducted.
- Training for judges on IP rights enforcement conducted.
- Report on administrative justice in Uzbekistan developed.
Objective 2 (Development of the Legal Profession):
- *The Conflict of Laws* by Adrian Briggs translated.
- Two research projects on Hague Principles completed by TSUL.
- International Investment and International Private Law Courses for TSUL developed.
- International Investment Law Course for UWED developed.
- Training on judicial ethics for judges in the Regions conducted.
- Support the development of several courses for young lawyers (including related training-of-teachers) for the Chamber of Advocates.
- Support the Lawyers’ Training Center under the Ministry of Justice to hold a national conference on legal training and ongoing legal reforms.
- Support the Ombudsman’s Office to develop a new version of the Law on the Ombudsman, including organization of public hearings and roundtables.
- Events for Ombudsman’s Office specialists and members of the Commission on the Observance of Constitutional Human Rights and Freedoms.
- Human Rights Course for GPO Academy developed.
- Strategic plan for international accreditation and procedures for the GPO Academy developed.
- Professional development training for MFA Treaty Law Department staff delivered.
- Training-of-teachers on a mediation course for the Lawyers Training Center and for the Center for Professional Training of Lawyers by International Standards under TSUL conducted.

Objective 3 (Development of a Legal Enabling Environment for Civil Society and NGOs):
- Training on capacity building of LRP grantees for effective provision of legal aid to vulnerable groups in Tashkent.
- Free legal assistance (by LRP grantees) to 6,900 people from vulnerable groups provided.
- 8,200 people reached through awareness-raising events and information on a range of rule of law topics distributed.
- 14,200 leaflets/booklets with legal information developed and distributed by LRP grantees.
VI. CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OR TIMING OF SERVICES

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, international travel remains very limited, which impacts in-person training with international experts and eliminates the possibility of study trips. During the reporting period LRP has been able to adapt programming, employing in-person, online and mixed approaches with remote involvement of international experts.

However, the COVID-19 situation in the country has been worsening, with the infection spreading at alarming rates. LRP continues to monitor the situation around COVID-19 and will adjust programming accordingly.

Additionally, LRP has encountered challenges in its continuing efforts to improve the legal enabling environment for civil society. In 2019, LRP supported a working group of CSOs and government representatives that developed a draft Law on NGOs. Unfortunately, a Presidential Resolution of November 4, 2020, created a new working group to develop a draft Code on NGOs, led by the MOJ.

This new working group, led by the MOJ, consists only of GONGOs and experts from state bodies. It posted its first draft of the Code on the MOJ’s website in October 2019, which was heavily criticized as it was seen as more regressive than the existing law and regulations.

Subsequently, two independent groups of CSOs decided to draft their own versions of the Code on NGOs, hoping that Parliament or the MOJ would listen to their suggestions or even incorporate some components of their drafts into the MOJ-sponsored Code.

One of these independent groups, led by the Legal Issues Research Center in cooperation with the Development Strategy Center, requested LRP support on drafting their alternative version, based on the fact that the Development Strategy Center had had informal discussions with the MOJ on potential cooperation on drafting a new Code. Unfortunately, the MOJ, in a letter addressed to LRP, dated February 26, 2020, stated that the government had no interest in open collaboration on any other version of the Code and that everyone should just submit their inputs directly to the MOJ.

Following this letter, LRP decided to withhold support to any of the alternative Codes being developed by the CSO groups. However, LRP has held multiple meetings with the MOJ to offer support for drafting the new Code. Although discussions included potential activities that could take place to support the drafting of the Code, there has been no engagement by the MOJ.

By the end of the reporting period, the MOJ’s newest draft of the Code was not yet published, and the current content is unknown. Once the draft is published, LRP will discuss with USAID further steps to be taken, given the challenges that surround(ed) the
drafting process of this piece of legislation. LRP is ready to support public hearings, hold roundtables and provide international expertise to further the discussion of the Code; however, if the MOJ continues to develop the Code without requesting LRP support or if the Code turns out to be regressive and USAID does not want to support it, this may affect the LRP work plan and deliverables under the task order with USAID.