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USAID partners with the people and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to improve the country's economy, governance, health and education so families can build better lives.



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Dear Reader,

This newsletter is an overview of the most significant milestones achieved by USAID and our partners from January through March, 2015.

The stories were selected to demonstrate the diversity and the scope of USAID programs in the Kyrgyz Republic and to celebrate the hard work of everyone who made these achievements happen.

USAID News of Note

Assistant Administrator Jonathan Stivers Visits the Kyrgyz Republic



Meeting with local entrepreneurs at the country's largest wholesale market, Dordo Bazaar. Photo: BGI

[Jonathan Stivers](#), USAID Asia Bureau Assistant Administrator, visited the Kyrgyz Republic on April 4-7, 2015. Stivers oversees USAID assistance in 32 countries in Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific Islands, and manages a bureau and overseas staff of approximately 1,200 development professionals. This was Assistant Administrator Stivers' first visit to the Kyrgyz Republic.

On April 4, the Assistant Administrator visited a new USAID-supported [Tax Service Center at Dordo Market](#), which serves over 7,000 businesses and entrepreneurs.

During his trip to Jalalabad on April 5, Stivers met farmers and agriculture advisory service providers to discuss new opportunities provided by the [USAID Agro Horizon](#); a project that will assist over 40,000 farmers to increase productivity and income.

Stivers also visited the Jalalabad Oblast Consolidated Hospital Maternity Department to learn about the major nutritional challenges facing women and children in the Kyrgyz Republic and how [USAID's SPRING project](#) addresses these challenges in the Jalal-Abad and Naryn regions. *"We are very pleased to have USAID's SPRING project working in districts of Jalalabad that are facing challenges with nutrition for women and children. We look forward to this good partnership,"* said Jalalabad Oblast Deputy Governor Baktybek Anarkulov.

Stivers met former Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev to discuss USAID's current and prospective development partnerships with the government. At a meeting with local entrepreneurs hosted by [USAID's Business Growth Initiative](#), Stivers discussed challenges and opportunities facing local businesses. The Assistant Administrator had the opportunity to meet with those who benefit directly from USAID's assistance during a visit to Alternative to Narcology a local non-profit organization, that with the help of [USAID Quality Health Care Program](#), supports those struggling with drug use to rebuild their lives.

Based on his experience in the Kyrgyz Republic Stivers remarked, *"The work you all are doing is central to everything we are doing in Central Asia. It's at the heart of it in my opinion....The Kyrgyz Republic cannot fail, it cannot step back - it has made too much progress....They have their challenges as a region... but the justification for being here with a very robust development package is very easy. The work that has been done supporting this country is first-grade and I am proud of it."*

Our success stories



THE DELICIOUS SMELL OF BREAD



NEW APPROACH TO READING INSTRUCTION



LEGAL CLINICS HELP CITIZENS OBTAIN DOCUMENTATION



NEW TB INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICES - SAFER HOSPITALS



OUTPATIENT TB TREATMENT MAKES RECOVERY EASIER

Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

USAID partners to support inclusive and accountable democratic processes and to improve government policies and services to achieve a well-governed and prosperous Kyrgyz Republic.



Photo: e-Governance Academy

Kyrgyz Republic Develops e-Governance

On February 24, the e-Governance Academy, an Estonian non-profit organization, signed a grant with USAID that will assist the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GOKR) to implement electronic governance (e-governance) initiatives over the coming years. First Vice Prime Minister Tairbek Sarpashev expressed the commitment of the GOKR to the initiative as he announced its intention to fund a central e-governance coordination unit. The partnership is the result of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' agreement with State Department under the auspices of the Emerging Donors Challenge Fund.

Arvo Ott, the CEO of the e-Governance Academy, says that what is needed first and foremost is to provide the Kyrgyz agency overseeing the e-field with the organizational and legal capacity to coordinate the development of e-governance in the country. *“Stage one in the project is drawing up documents, holding meetings and training people, as well as passing on the required technological competence to our Kyrgyz partners,”* he explained. *“Only after that can we talk about coming up with IT solutions and e-services, once we’re sure someone’s in place who’ll take responsibility for their sustainable development and knows how to go about it.”*

Ott says that he has encountered situations in other countries where the technical solutions that are developed are not useful because there is no responsible central figure or anyone to direct their development. *“We’re advising and training employees from the Central Coordination Unit and Implementation Centre for e-governance of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic so that development continues after our working group leaves,”* he said.

Further stages of the project include creation of the legal framework, drafting of the necessary action plans and documents describing IT architecture, and training an e-governance technical team and senior public officials. Up to four state agencies will then be linked to the data exchange system, and initial e-services will be developed and offered for Kyrgyz citizens to test.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening Program (GGPAS)

*Implementing Organization:
International Resources Group*

charged the State Personnel Service (SPS) with drafting the first unified Ethics Code, a document that would establish norms guiding all the civil and municipal servants in performing their official duties. *“It is difficult to earn citizens’ trust in the work of civil and municipal servants. Therefore, it is crucial that their behavior complies with the highest ethical standards”* said Aaly Karashev, Director of the SPS.

In November - December 2014, the SPS spearheaded the development of the Ethics Code supported by two national consultants from USAID’s Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening (GGPAS) project. To ensure that the new document addresses questions and comments of all the major stakeholders, SPS - with USAID’s support - conducted public discussions with national and local government members, international organizations, and civil society experts. *“This is the first time the Ethics Code has been discussed with civil and municipal servants as key stakeholders in the ongoing governance reforms,”* said Vice Governor of Chui Province Kumushbek Shamkanov. *“Such a collaborative format allowed us to raise our concerns and ask questions directly from the developers of the Ethics Code.”* The final draft Code is currently under review at the President’s Office.



Discussions of the draft Ethics Code with national government representative. Photo: Academy of Public Administration

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Jasa.kg

Implementing Organization:

International Youth Foundation (IYF)

New Youth Life Skills Program Included in Official Curriculum

The Passport to Success (PTS) life skills program was included in the official list of extracurricular programs for residential institutions by the Ministry of Education and Science. The PTS program was developed by the USAID project Jasa.kg implemented by the International Youth Foundation and local NGOs. This interactive program teaches four core competencies to high school students: Personal Development, Problem Solving, Healthy Lifestyle, and Workplace Success. During the Jasa.kg project, 1,267 youth from 27 residential institutions graduated from the PTS program.

A PTS participant Datkabek Berdibek uluu notes, *“Before PTS I had more weaknesses than strengths... I did know what I can achieve, how to behave, I was afraid of public speaking and had very few friends. I was like a computer without Internet access. ...the PTS program was an impulse for me to start moving forward. After the program I realized my potential.”* A mother of another PTS participant Zulfizar Mansurova says *“I am very thankful for the [PTS] program – it helped my daughter to open up, to become more confident and to believe in herself... I believe that she will find her place in life. It would be great if other students could participate in this program.”*

To ensure that the PTS program continues after Jasa.kg project ends, one of the project partners, NGO Childhood Institute, successfully advocated for PTS inclusion in the official list of extracurricular programs for residential institutions. Moreover, a standard four day training-of-trainers for the PTS program is now included in the qualification training system of Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAO). From March – April 2015, Childhood Institute in cooperation with KAO conducted the first training for trainers in Bishkek and Osh for 43 teachers from 29 residential institutions from across the country. Childhood Institute will continue working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that PTS program remains a permanent component of secondary education in the Kyrgyz Republic.



High school students solving a problem during a Passport to Success Class. Photo: IYF

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

USAID/DFID

**Kyrgyz Parliamentary
Strengthening Program (KPSP)**

Implementing Organization:

Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI)

USAID Supports Effective Coordination between the Legislative and Executive Branches

On March 13, the Administration of the Kyrgyz Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) adopted and signed a resolution on effective coordination of legislative activities between the Jogorku Kenesh and the Executive Branch (Government). The resolution was the result of a two-day legislative coordination meeting held on February 28 and March 1 supported by the USAID and DFID Kyrgyz Parliament Strengthening Program (KPSP). The meeting gathered key actors in the legislative process from the Jogorku Kenesh, the Ministry of Justice, and the Government.

Participants noted that effective legislative planning is hindered by the lack of communication and misaligned schedules of the Jogorku Kenesh and the Government. Other challenges include duplication of responsibilities, lack of evidence-based analysis of draft laws, and lack of departmental planning. A few technical problems were also noted, such as the increasing frequency with which bills are drafted and considered in packages that are more difficult to analyze. Participants also stressed the need in all governmental institutions for strategic planning of legislative activities based on economic and social analysis. They suggested using the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2013 – 2017 as a springboard for such planning.

The meeting participants recommended to develop a unified approach to planning of legislative activities and agreed to better align their schedules based on the timetable of the Jogorku Kenesh. Other recommendations included creating an official information and law depository based on Toktom and Paragraph databases and development of a strategic legislative plan based on economic and social analysis with the Jogorku Kenesh appointing a committee to oversee its implementation.



The meeting participants discuss ways to improve inter-agency coordination. Photo: KPSP

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).

Economic Growth

USAID builds a stronger economy and increases employment in the Kyrgyz Republic by strengthening business and government so families can build better lives.

Women Leaders in Small and Medium Enterprises

*Implementing Organization:
ACDI / VOCA*

Support to Women Entrepreneurs

From March 11-16, the 9th National Garment Trade Fair entitled “Fashion Industry 2015: Manufacturers and Equipment” took place in Bishkek. The trade fair was hosted by the Association of Light Manufacturing Enterprises “LEGRPOM” and was supported by the USAID Women’s Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises (WLSME) program. The fair has become a major platform utilized by Kyrgyz garment companies to promote new collections. It is also a useful venue for

customers and wholesalers to negotiate agreements and discuss the latest trends in design and technology in the garments industry. Over 110 garment companies from Bishkek and other regions exhibited their products along with the equipment providers from Germany; software providers from Ukraine; fabric importers from India; and packaging product providers from Russia, China and Europe.

A total of 24 women entrepreneurs supported by WLSME from all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic took part in the fair and for many it was their first opportunity to participate in a formal trade exhibition and for four women the event resulted in new profitable contracts.

The guiding principal of WLSME is that women entrepreneurs can establish successful businesses if they actively engage in targeted marketing activities that provide opportunities to make new connections and to access new markets and information. The overall program goal is to increase the number and the size of women-owned small and medium enterprises by working with 960 women entrepreneurs across the country. WLSME also helps entrepreneurs establish better connections with the suppliers and the buyers, connect with key industry associations, and access service providers.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).



WLSME participants demonstrating their products at the “Legprom” trade fair. Photo: Anna Kuznetsova

Business Growth Initiative

*Implementing Organization:
Deloitte Consulting, Inc.*

State Tax Service Launches Universal Tax Filing Campaign

On February 10, Deputy Chairperson Rasym Aidralieva of the State Tax Service (STS) opened the first of eight USAID-sponsored training sessions for 200 tax inspectors on the universal tax filing campaign and new tax declaration forms. Beginning in 2016, all Kyrgyzstani citizens with taxable property or income must file a tax return using one of three new uniform tax declarations. The trainings are part of a broader package of support provided by USAID’s Business Growth Initiative (BGI) program to the STS. BGI supported legal and regulatory amendments, helped design and develop the new tax forms, created guidance materials for inspectors and filers, developed an online tax calculator, and produced audio and video commercials. In February, BGI launched a radio, television, and print public awareness campaign in Kyrgyz and Russian languages to publicize the new tax requirements and filing procedures. A similar public awareness campaign was launched in 2013 by USAID’s REFORMA Project. It is worth noting that over the previous year universal tax filings increased by 8,275 declarations while in 2013 the filings increased by over 20,000 declarations. Videos and more information including the tax calculator and online fillable forms are available on the STS website www.declaracia.kg.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).



Public Service Announcement about the universal tax declaration played a key part of public awareness campaign

Business Growth Initiative and REFORMA

*Implementing Organization:
Deloitte Consulting, Inc.*

Adoption of Technology Promotes Efficiency and Better Governance in the Mining Industry

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the State Geology Agency is responsible for licensing and managing mining operations. In 2012, the USAID REFORMA Project conducted an extensive institutional analysis of the State Geology Agency including internal regulations, systems, processes and capacities. Based on the results of USAID analysis, the Agency understood the necessity of transitioning from paper-based processes to an automated system.

In August 2013, USAID initiated the development of a digital geological data management system allows the State Geology Agency to ensure uniform management of licensing practices, enables private sector and intra government reporting, and disseminates information to the public on who holds mineral rights. The management system was completed at the end of 2014. The State Geology Agency now electronically stores and retrieves documentation and information for 1,035 mining licenses. The systems also has allowed the State Geology Agency to catalogue and retrieve all documentation related to licenses, such as geological surveys, periodic activity reports, environmental impact assessments, and tax receipts. In addition, the software enables the government agency to generate summary reports on mining and exploration activity by region, mineral, and time period.

The new system has helped State Geology Agency staff to significantly shorten document processing times and to immediately generate various statistical and program reports on license activity that previously required manual calculation. USAID has helped to reduce the time required to calculate taxes for each licensee from 30 hours to 5 minutes.

USAID REFORMA also assisted the State Geology Agency in improving its website, which now informs the public of the deposits slated for auction or competitive tender and provides potential investors with documents critical to the bidding process. The website, <http://geology.kg>, hosts an interactive map of deposits that illustrates the location, volume, type of ore of explored deposits, and information on the holders of licensed rights to these deposits.

“The development of the geological management system, along with other performance solutions supported by USAID, has improved the overall image of the State Geology Agency and increased the transparency of our operations,” said Duishenbek Zilaliev, Director of the State Geology Agency.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#) and [click here](#).



Agency staff learning functions of the new software. Photo: Ilona Asyrankulova

Agro Horizon

*Implementing Organization:
ACDI / VOCA*

New USAID Agriculture Project Launches Activities in the South

On February 24, USAID formally initiated its flagship agricultural project Agro Horizon by bringing together more than 120 farmers and agribusinesses to identify how to best link smallholder producers to more lucrative markets. USAID Agro Horizon is a four-year, \$22 million project that promotes market-based agricultural sustainability and food

security by increasing the productivity and competitiveness of over 45,000 smallholder farmers working in the fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy product, and egg production sectors. The project will work with 13% of all farmers in the provinces of Osh, Batken, Jalalabad, and Naryn. Discussion at the public launch focused on enhancing produce quality and quantity to increase domestic and export market sales for target farmers. USAID will assist farmers and processors to meet higher quality standards through improved storage, processing, transport, and marketing techniques.

In conjunction with the public launch, USAID supported the three-day Silk Way agricultural fair and trade forum (February 26-28) that drew more than 3,000 farmers, traders, and processors. Exhibitors from Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Dutch, Belorussian, and Russian companies demonstrated practical technologies that are beneficial for increasing livestock and crop production.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).



Participant in the Silk Way agricultural fair showcasing his products. Photo: Asel Karagazieva

Education

USAID partners with the people and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic for quality education so every child can have a brighter future.

Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening Program (GGPAS)

*Implementing Organization:
International Resources Group*

from across the south. The training module covered updates to regulations and legislation relevant to the education sector, modern school management, conflict prevention and resolution, leadership, monitoring and evaluation, and transparency and accountability of activities of the board of trustees at secondary schools. The training modules were developed with support from USAID's Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening (GGPAS) project.

Before the training, Rahat Sultanova, a newly appointed school manager from Kyzyl-Tuu village of Kara-Suu district, felt overwhelmed by her workload and was considering resigning. *"I am a newly appointed school manager and no one ever clearly explained what my duties are. Paperwork and public events have consumed most of my time and energy. At the training, I learned what I am directly responsible to do. Knowing the actual workload, helped me reconsider my desire to resign."*

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Osh School Administrators Improve Management Practices

From January-March, the Osh Education Institute in partnership with the Mountain Society Development Support Program delivered a series of trainings for 89 school managers drawn



School directors engage in a friendly discussion during a group activity at USAID's training. Photo: GGPAS

Reading Together Project

*Implementing Organization:
American Institutes for Research
(AIR), Save the Children*

and USAID participating in the day's activities. The Ministry of Education and Science's representative expressed her gratitude for USAID's support, focusing in particular on the value of in-service training for teachers.

The festival included a wide range of events. School teachers conducted open lessons highlighting the new interactive techniques for reading instruction they learned from USAID QRP. Students took part in a young readers contest and essay competition. Parents jumped in to help their children create masterpieces for an exhibition of handmade books. A particular treat of the festival was a theater competition with children bringing to life their favorite fairy tales.

In total, over 1,000 children took part in the ten-day festival and the happy winners received colorful books to support their love of reading.

To learn more about this project [click here](#).

Promoting Reading with a Creative Twist!

On February 20, USAID's Quality Reading Project (QRP) launched a ten-day educational event devoted to building reading skills among primary school children. Children's reading skills are weak in the Kyrgyz Republic; a recent assessment found that only 11% of children can read at grade level. The opening ceremony took place at Bishkek's educational complex number 66 with Representatives of Ministry of Education and Science, the City Department of Education,



Third grade students practice their reading skills during a lesson observed by district teachers. Such lessons are an important way for teachers to share new methods and activities. Photo: Anna Kuznetsova

Health

USAID supports the people and government of the Kyrgyz Republic to fight the country's most serious infectious diseases to save lives.

Quality Health Care and Defeat TB Projects

*Implementing Organization:
Abt Associates*

Vice Prime Minister on Social Issues, Ministry of Health representatives, and international organizations discussed efforts to combat TB.

USAID brightened the day for children receiving treatment at Bishkek TB hospitals through entertaining and educational performances and a drawing competition. Two Bishkek non-profits that assist homeless people, drug users, people living with HIV, and migrants hosted free dinners where they offered on-site TB screening. In Archa-Beshik, one of the poorest districts of Bishkek, residents participated in a quiz game on TB and a soccer tournament. In Karakol, on the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul, residents and city officials took part in a performance competition and a flash mob to raise awareness about TB.

In addition to public campaigns, USAID coordinated round tables for health care professionals and decision makers on TB drug management, TB laboratory improvement, and nutrition for TB patients. TB Day events reached at least 2,000 people directly and many more via extensive and very positive media coverage. The Kyrgyz Republic faces a very high burden of difficult to treat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and USAID currently addresses the disease through four programs.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).

Information Helps Save Lives

USAID celebrated World Tuberculosis (TB) Day throughout the month of March with over 20 educational events across the Kyrgyz Republic. On World TB day - March 24, Bishkek residents received free rides on a city trolley decorated with informative posters on TB prevention and participated in quizzes that tested their TB knowledge. Following the trolley ride, journalists participated in a World TB Day press conference where the



*The first passenger of TB campaign trolleybus greeted by USAID/Red Crescent volunteers.
Photo: Anna Kuznetsova*

Defeat TB Project

*Implementing Organization:
Abt Associates*

Best Primary Health Care Facilities of Bishkek Receive New Equipment

In April, the National Tuberculosis Partners of the Kyrgyz Republic organized a conference to discuss

the results of tuberculosis (TB) awareness month and to celebrate the work of the staff of TB care facilities. Bishkek's best TB experts received awards and the best primary health care organizations of Bishkek received medical supplies totaling \$200,000 provided by the USAID Defeat TB Project. The medical equipment included a wide range of essential items such as face masks, syringes, devices for measuring blood pressure, floor scales, protective robes for lab personnel, stethoscopes, and other types of much needed equipment.

Representatives of Bishkek Mayor's Office, the City Health Department, Bishkek Family Medicine Centers, National Center of Phthisiology and TB facilities, and international organizations participated in the event. Participants discussed the latest recommendations of the World Health Organization on TB diagnosis and treatment and the achievements of the National TB Program. The USAID Defeat TB Project was launched in November 2014 to reduce the spread of regular and drug-resistant tuberculosis. The project also supports equitable access to quality TB services for the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.



*Conference participants test donated equipment.
Photo: Anna Kuznetsova*

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

SPRING

*Implementing Organization:
JSI Research & Training
Institute, Inc.*

Improved Nutrition for Women and Children

On March 19, USAID launched a new nutrition project, Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING), to improve nutrition of women and young children. Women and children in the Kyrgyz Republic face high levels of chronic malnutrition and anemia. According to the USAID Demographic Health Survey (DHS) of 2012, about one in five children under five are stunted (too short for their

age). Stunting is a condition caused by chronic malnutrition, which is irreversible by two years of age and has long term impacts on the health and cognitive development of children. Among women of reproductive age, 35% suffer from anemia, as do 43% of children aged six to 59 months. Anemia weakens the body, is associated with poor health, and puts mothers at risk for complications during pregnancy and delivery. Poor nutrition is associated with inadequate awareness and nutrition services, low levels of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life, and lack of appropriate complementary feeding from six to 23 months.

The SPRING project will work in ten jurisdictions in the Jalalabad and the Naryn Oblasts to fill in these gaps, in close coordination with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and other development partners. SPRING will help the Kyrgyz Republic to implement internationally recommended nutrition practices and policies, encourage better nutrition-related behavior, and enhance diet quality and diversity for women and children through September 2016.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).



**Mom and baby during nutrition consultation.
Photo: SPRING**

Food for Peace

*Implementing Organization:
Resource & Policy Exchange*

USAID Donates Food to Vulnerable Citizens

USAID and the American non-governmental organization Resource & Policy Exchange (RPX) delivered 75,000 kilograms of food products to the Kyrgyz Republic as part of the USAID Food for Peace Program. The program helps to enrich the diets of women and children patients residing in long-term tuberculosis, psycho-

neurological, and medical treatment facilities. This year, the food products will be distributed to 66 institutions from all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic by Ergene Public Foundation. The products are a nutritious lentil mix manufactured in the U.S. by Breedlove Dehydrated Foods. Each package includes dried carrots, onions, rice and lentils and is fortified with vitamins and minerals. To start the distribution process, on March 26 USAID, RPX, and Ergene hosted the a roundtable to highlight access to nutrition for TB patients and their families.

Since 2006, USAID's Food for Peace Program has delivered 27 million servings of nutritious food to over 50,000 children and adults in the Kyrgyz Republic.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).



**Supplements donated by USAID can be used to enrich local dishes with vital minerals and vitamins.
Photo: Anna Kuznetsova**

Stay Connected!



www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic

Our Contacts:

United States Agency
for International Development (USAID)

171 Prospek Mira,

Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

Phone: +996 312 55 12 41

E-mail: akgdocs@usaid.gov