



# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Kyrgyzstan October 2015

## STRENGTHENING VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN KYRGYZ MUNICIPALITIES



Children of the Bosteri municipality. Thanks to the project's support, the local community were able to express their need for a new kindergarten.

**Decentralisation is one of the priorities of the Kyrgyz government in power since 2012. In line with this, the main goal of this project is to strengthen the ability of citizens to participate in the budget process in their municipality, and to ensure that local governments use their funds adequately for public services.**

Kyrgyzstan's transition to democracy has been turbulent. Dissatisfaction over alleged corruption and an erosion of civil liberties has led to a low level of trust in government institutions. Unbalanced regional development is also a source of popular discontent. Therefore, the Kyrgyz government has established a decentralisation reform agenda which aims at giving more responsibility to the local levels of government. It is intended that the municipalities optimise the way they manage public finances in order to focus on the priority needs of their citizens. The SDC's support to local governance is contributing to this reform.

### PARTICIPATE IN THE BUDGETARY PROCESS

One of the main objectives of this project is to establish participatory decision-making processes. The project strengthens the ability of citizens to participate in the budget process at the local level and introduces a course of action whereby the local government and community work together.

To begin with, citizens establish initiative groups. In these groups, they discuss the important issues facing their village and define the most urgent problems. Together with the local government, these initiative groups can prepare a project to address the priority needs of the community.

The community is trained on budgeting and finance, which enables them to join the discussion on budget allocation led by the municipality. The result is a joint action plan. During its implementation, steering and monitoring are also carried out jointly by initiative groups and local councils. This ensures that the local government spends its funds according to local needs and provides as much transparency and accountability as possible.

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Not only must citizens be trained, but local governments must also strengthen their managing capacities and change their governing attitude to one of more responsiveness to citizens' initiatives. This is the essence of the second main objective of this project. Trainings for municipal staff are intended to increase their knowledge regarding planning, reporting and auditing.

Additionally, small grants are provided for the direct implementation of small infrastructure projects. The purpose of this tool is to put into practice the whole cycle of the participatory budgetary process and to apply new skills. For long-term effectiveness, the SDC is also involved in intensive policy dialogue at the national level to advocate for the improvement and implementation of the legal framework.

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## FINALLY – A NEW KINDERGARTEN!

The innovative model of community engagement in the local budgetary process has so far been introduced in the two provinces of Issy-Kul and Jalalabad. This has strengthened the capacities of the local communities to voice their needs and demand accountability from the local governments.

One example from the 58 projects that have already implemented is the kindergarten in the Bosteri municipality. As there were not enough places in the old kindergarten, many women were deprived of the opportunity to engage in economic activities. Instead, they had to stay at home and take care of their children. In 2012, Roza Toktobaeva joined the initiative group of residents which was taught how to establish a new form of relationship with the municipality.

She says: "With the trainings, discussions and public consultations we learned how to build a dialogue with the local government and how to get our voices to be heard. Through the project, the lack of places in kindergartens was identified as a top priority." They were able to convince the local government and – with the help of the project's grant programme – the former kindergarten was reconstructed and extended for an additional 20 to 24 children.

The municipality also benefits from the initiative as Timur Ayilchiev, head of the Bosteri local government, reveals: "To participate in the project was a good exercise in management for us. We learned to pay careful attention to budget management. As a result, these changes increase people's trust in the government."

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## IMPRINT

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Photos

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## PROJECT AT A GLANCE

### Project title

Strengthening Voice and Accountability

### Duration

2011–2019 (currently Phase 2)

### Current budget (2015-2019)

4,72 million CHF

### Implementing agency

Development Policy Institute

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## COUNTRY FACTS (Source: World Bank)

### Population (2014)

Kyrgyzstan : 5,8 million

Switzerland : 8,1 million

### Life expectancy at birth (2013)

Kyrgyzstan : women 74 years, men 66 years

Switzerland : women 85 years, men 81 years

### Gross domestic product per capita (2013)

Kyrgyzstan : 1282 USD

Switzerland : 84 733 USD

