

Kyrgyzstan: Background/situation/problem or question to be solved:

In recent years, Kyrgyzstan has seen a significant rollback in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. According to the UN report on the Human Development Index in 2016, Kyrgyzstan has taken the 120th place and in the index of perception of corruption has taken the 136th place. The economic decline, the lack of effective social protection mechanisms, and unemployment provoked a large scale of internal and external migration, as a result of which more than one million people are working in Russia and Kazakhstan, and despite the external migrants' remittances, more than 30,6% of population live below the poverty line. Changes in the political space made a significant impact on the capacity of civil society to influence the decision-making process in Kyrgyzstan.

The integration processes of Kyrgyzstan in the Eurasian Economic Union, joining the Customs Union, and rapprochement with Russia allowed our authorities to copy Russian anti-constitutional initiatives aimed at ignoring international human rights obligations, the principles of democracy, and as a result, triggered attempts to narrow the political space of NGOs, persecution of independent media, human rights activists, and the opposition. The KR Government does not seek to implement the international obligations. These processes directly affected deterioration of the situation in the country, marginalization and radicalization of population, decline in level of culture in the society and in observance of universal values, which ultimately led to increased violence in the society, when the most vulnerable were women and children, victims of domestic and sexual violence, forced marriages and bride kidnapping.

Thus, according to the National Statistics Committee, the number of cases and forms of violence in Kyrgyzstan is increasing every year. The Ministry of Internal Affairs annually responds to almost 10,000 cases of family conflict, when 15% of the crimes resulted in death or serious injuries¹. UN Women stated that from 40 to 50 women and girls are hospitalized every month in Bishkek because of domestic violence². Bride kidnapping, violent, religious, and early marriages are widespread forms of gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan, based on a tolerant attitude of the society that perceives them as part of cultural traditions and customs. According to UNICEF, 13% of marriages are among teenagers, in villages this indicator reaches 16%, i.e. 7-9 thousand girls get married before they reach adulthood. Most often, these marriages are organized by the parents of the girls, with the participation of representatives of the clergy³, despite the law on the prohibition of religious marriages with minors. Bride kidnapping, despite the tightening of punishment, is widespread in rural areas where 96% of the Kyrgyz live, 80% of marriages are the result of bride kidnapping and 57% of them were without the consent of the bride.

Unfortunately, the victims of all forms of gender-based violence most often refuse to protect their rights due to economic dependence on their husbands, lack of housing, the reason for mental and cultural views, traditional and patriarchal stigma, fearing to be disgraced by the public, relatives, fearing revenge of rapists due to the distrust in the law enforcement agencies. Other factors are the lack of legal awareness or access to information about the possibility of protecting their rights, and the possibility of seeking help from specialized organizations and crisis centres. Realizing the scale and danger of gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan, understanding the internal and external environment that provokes its growth, the Action is aimed at minimizing all forms of gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan. Local authorities and communities, their leaders, courts of the old, religious leaders, members of local initiative groups, village health committees, who are among the first to learn about family conflicts, and the victims themselves united in the National Coalition "Against all forms of gender-based violence: from commitment to action" should play a major role in preventing violence

- target groups/participants

Territorial state bodies. *Reasons for involvement:* Territorial inspectors of internal bodies, social workers, education and healthcare workers are the first by law who face acts of gender-based violence in families and are important actors in protection of victims. Their participation in protection from gender and family violence has a positive effect, but they do not have proper skills to identify, prevent and resolve the cases of violence and they often do not realize their share of responsibility and role in protection from violence. *Role:* This Action will strengthen capacity of the territorial state bodies' employees that provide services to the target communities, so they could work with vulnerable groups of people, properly respond to cases of violence, and be involved in interagency cooperation to protect from gender-based violence in families.

¹ <https://kloop.kg/blog/2017/04/21/nasilie-stavshee-prichinoj-smerti/>

² https://www.humanrights.gov/pdf/2014-hrr-translations/kyrgyz_republic-rus-final.pdf

³ <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/27424930.html>

They will also train the staff of aiyl okmotus (local territorial governments) to identify and address the issues and the root causes of violence.

Schoolchildren, students/youth. *Reasons for involvement:* Children are the most vulnerable in cases of domestic violence. In regions, due to internal and external migration, children stay with families of relatives, where they are at increased risk of domestic and sexual violence. Mostly they are children from unsecured, disadvantaged families, who do not have information about protection of their rights, keep silence and cannot protect themselves. Among them the most vulnerable are girls, because they are additionally victims of early marriages, bride kidnapping and they lack opportunities for education. *Role:* Capacity of schoolchildren will be strengthened through training with the use of peer-to-peer approach with the focus on prevention and response to violence, gender stereotypes, reproductive health, rights, personal growth, and communication skills. Students will be involved in activities on raising awareness of gender violence. **Women and girls, victims of violence, early marriages, and bride kidnapping.** *Reasons for involvement:* Women and children, victims of domestic and gender violence face violence due to poverty, economic dependence, silence and legal illiteracy, social and legal insecurity, unemployment, traditional attitudes and censure. Most of these cases of gender-based violence are observed in rural areas of the country. In villages, 80% of marriages are the result of bride kidnapping and more than half of them are concluded without the consent of the bride, when the girls did not know their husbands. Often only a religious marriage is registered with victims of early and forced marriages and kidnapped brides, so it is difficult for girls to further defend their interests in court. *Role:* They will receive direct legal, psychological, social assistance, will be involved in advocacy and capacity building activities and will be empowered to become leaders, develop business ideas and projects.

activity: title, content, place and time

Monitoring on implementation of recommendations of OSCE and preparation of shadow reports (Bishkek)

BDK will conduct monitoring on implementation of recommendations on eradication of gender violence provided by OSCE Action Plan. The recommendations of shadow reports will be discussed at the round-table meeting. 1 round-table meeting with involvement of at least 40 representatives of the Parliament, the Government, NGOs, international organizations will be held to discuss the recommendations

Providing direct services to victims of all forms of violence in Bishkek and Osh

While working with the target communities the Action partners in close cooperation with the professionals in the field of education, healthcare, and social protection that provide services to the target groups will identify victims of all forms of violence that are in need for psychological, social, medical, legal, and attorney's assistance. Legal support will be provided by BDK. When necessary, victims of violence will be referred to other institutions and/or to providers of friendly services (crisis centres for women, clinics working with vulnerable children, and the others).

Strengthening capacity of victims of violence. (From all regions of KR) Trainings with Innovation for Change non personal growth and horizontal leadership will be conducted for victims of violence. The training on personal growth will help to develop self-confidence, resolve internal problems caused by negative experience in the past, find support in themselves, and feel strength and calmness. Trainings on horizontal leadership will help the participants to realize that they are leaders, learn how to interact with the other people in the community, how to cooperate and make decisions, and become leaders in their own lives, in their families, communities, and in the country. The trainings will help the participants to teach each other, share their opinions and experience, help create and expand horizontal leadership and networks, become more self-confident, and improve their leadership skills.

Development and distribution of mobile application (To all KR)A mobile application "Protection" will be developed for free downloading in internet. It will contain information on rights' protection, contacts of law enforcement bodies, ombudsman's offices, human rights organizations, and shelters. Mobile application "Protection" with the function "SOS" will turn the telephone of a user in a secret "emergency button", which will allow informing immediately the family of the user in case of any danger situation. When the relatives receive such a call, they can immediately contact law enforcement bodies or contact the Action lawyers in online regime or by mobile phone. Mobile application will be distributed during information campaigns, trainings and seminars for schoolchildren and students, through social media.