

THE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT (Jigerduu Jarandar - AC)

FHI 360 IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The Active Communities (Jigerduu Jarandar - AC) Project is designed to improve people's lives in the Kyrgyz Republic by assisting communities, local governments, CSOs, and the private sector to better address problems of local concern.



In 2021, AC launched the Complex Crisis Fund (CCF) to strengthen partnership between civil society and public authorities to foster inclusive civic engagement.

Thirteen CCF partners implemented projects across three thematic clusters – contributing to the legislative reform process, providing capacity building and facilitating greater civic awareness, and empowering vulnerable groups to engage in public life.

OVERVIEW

The Active Communities (Jigerduu Jarandar–AC) Complex Crisis Fund's (CCF) overarching goal is to create a robust and resilient civil society ecosystem by strengthening collaboration between civil society and government and improving citizens' understanding of and demand for their rights. CCF activities increase constructive, informed citizen engagement and support citizens' ability to better engage with the local government.



CCF's approach comprises three complementary focal areas:



1 Participating in and monitoring the legislative reform process;

Providing capacity building and facilitating greater civic and legal awareness of citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs); and



3 Empowering vulnerable groups including women, youth, and persons with disabilities to participate in public life.

PARTICIPATING IN AND MONITORING THE LEGISLATIVE REFORM PROCESS

To create a more transparent legislative review process with greater civil society involvement to effectively represent public interests, CCF partners aimed to cultivate constructive interactions between citizens and legislators, particularly enabling citizens and CSOs to have access to reliable information on changes and amendments to the Constitution, laws, and regulations affecting citizens' rights. The AC Project conducted trainings for CSOs and civic activists on monitoring Parliament activities and prepared guidelines for citizens' participation in the legislative process to help CSOs and civic activists access information on drafting legislation, submit recommendations via governmental online platforms, stay informed on further developments on legislative initiatives by participating in legislative proceedings, and if necessary, launch advocacy initiatives. CCF partners expanded public participation by strengthening civil society's ability to effectively participate in and influence the reform process and engage in constructive dialogue to develop a robust, inclusive, and peacefully engaged citizenry.

PROVIDING CAPACITY BUILDING AND FACILITATING GREATER CIVIC AND LEGAL AWARENESS

To promote civic engagement and support democratic and participatory governance, CCF partners provided capacity building activities on civic education for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Participants gained civic knowledge on their political/civic rights and responsibilities, built skills to participate in civic/political processes, and developed good citizenship traits necessary for democracy (e.g., critical thinking, negotiation skills, consensus building, and leadership). Overall, 4,784 citizens strengthened their capacity to participate in public life, equipped with ways to access political decision-making processes and ensure that public needs are more fully met.

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE

To activate women's participation in the legislative review process, CCF partners organized public discussions to report on the likely impacts of new constitutional norms on promotion of women's political rights. To promote women's political rights at the local level, newly elected women council members developed gender-sensitive work plans and advocated for women's participation in decision-making processes, lobbying for increased financial investments in female development and protection via gender responsive budgeting. The AC Project promoted women's participation and leadership in public decision-making by providing them with knowledge and skills, cultivating a more gender-sensitive local government and solving local gender-related community issues.



77 local CSOs

participated in CCF advocacy initiatives, programmatic events, discussions, and monitoring



43 laws and government policies

were proposed containing recommendations in relation to various laws and draft laws included in the legislative review process



4784 citizens

with strengthened civic awareness



**533 women
local council members
were better able to
perform their roles**

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE

CCF partners organized a series of awareness-raising and capacity building activities, enabling development of civic participation skills including analyzing and reviewing draft regulatory legal acts. In light of recent constitutional changes, CCF activities focused on youth engagement in decision-making processes within governmental structures and understanding the effects of constitutional changes and their legislative and regulatory impact on the rights, interests, and opportunities for youth and other vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making processes. Youth beneficiaries strengthened their capacities to organize a set of advocacy and awareness raising campaigns and promote constructive engagement with government entities. Members of youth-based organizations and NGO representatives working with youth, women, and persons with disabilities

participated in public discussions, creating a platform for extensive vertical and horizontal collaborations between youth-focused CSOs. CCF partners promoted youth political and civic engagement in democratic processes.

EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE

CCF partners built capacity and increased awareness of persons with disabilities regarding election processes focusing on national election legislation and international standards related to participation in elections, election technologies, and management of election processes. Training materials on electoral participation were provided with sign language interpretation and disseminated via partner CSOs to enhance public access to information on electoral rights of persons with disabilities. A physical accessibility checklist on persons with disabilities participation in public hearings was prepared and submitted to heads of pilot local self-governments and the Central Election Commission for provision of specialized services to persons with disabilities. CCF partners also initiated public discussions focusing on proposed changes to legislation and the impact such changes could have on citizens, including persons with disabilities, thus increasing access of persons with disabilities to electoral and legislative review processes.

