



LOCAL COUNCIL WOMEN DEPUTIES CLUB¹

Concept of support program



Saliya AKULOVA
commissioned by LGACA
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¹ Preliminary title.

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2022 Calendar Plan	Ошибка! Закладка не определена.

Why did an idea of Club emerge?

In August 2019, the law on 30% representation of women in local councils was passed. However, the quota does not automatically ensure women's political empowerment. Observations of the 2021 elections showed that about one third of the women who won were already respected in the community, held leadership positions, worked in NGOs, and had previously been deputies. These women did not become deputies thanks to the quota, but took the leading places in the candidates' ranking due to their reputation in the community. The second third are "silent" women deputies nominated by the local elite to "fill the quota," they are not always fully prepared for the role of deputy, they lack knowledge and sometimes political ambition to defend their own position. Another third of women deputies came to the council on their own as a result of campaigning and active work, but they also sometimes lack experience, knowledge, and political skills. All three categories note specific challenges of their participation in the political process due to the existing gender-sex models that dominate in the rural communities. At the same time, the women deputies' problems are not separate specific political problems, but reflect a general gender context of rural local communities.

Situation of women in general is worsening under the influence of low quality education, poverty, growing influence of radical Islam, transformation of values, insufficient development of social services and inclusion in local and national politics. Women are insufficiently engaged in decision-making processes, have little or no representation in leadership (regardless of ownership), and feel limited access to services, resources, new technologies, and information. Women receive lower wages with equal education and qualifications, and are more engaged in unpaid work. All this negatively affects women's opportunities to realize their political, social and economic rights.

An important factor is also the stereotypical expectations and the growing social and economic burden on men, which generates insecurity, fear of speaking openly about their problems, difficulties in communication and with the other sex. At the same time, it is easier for men to form coalitions and micro-groups, which are facilitated by established social norms of behavior, as well as presence of spending time together and availability of public spaces.

It is well known, real politics is formed not only and often not so much in the meeting room of the local council, but at the level of micro-groups and informal interaction of deputies. In this regard, men have more time and space to work out joint decisions and create coalitions. Women who are busy with family, unpaid labor, job, experiencing a lack of public spaces and places for leisure and political work, come to the council often without allies to support their initiatives and options for solutions.

These circumstances lead to the conclusion that women deputies need a space to gain professional knowledge, develop skills for political work and personal development, find allies and supporters, and build coalitions and exchanges.

The Local Council Women Deputies Club should serve such a space - both virtually and physically.

Club Definition, Goals and Objectives

The Local Council Women Deputies Club is a virtual and real space for gaining professional knowledge, developing political skills and personal development, finding allies and supporters, building coalitions and exchanges².

Goal of the Club is to strengthen opportunities to exercise political rights of women deputies, women candidates for deputies, activists of local communities by developing their professional competencies, personal skills and contributing to a favorable and balanced gender context³ in rural communities of the Kyrgyz Republic.

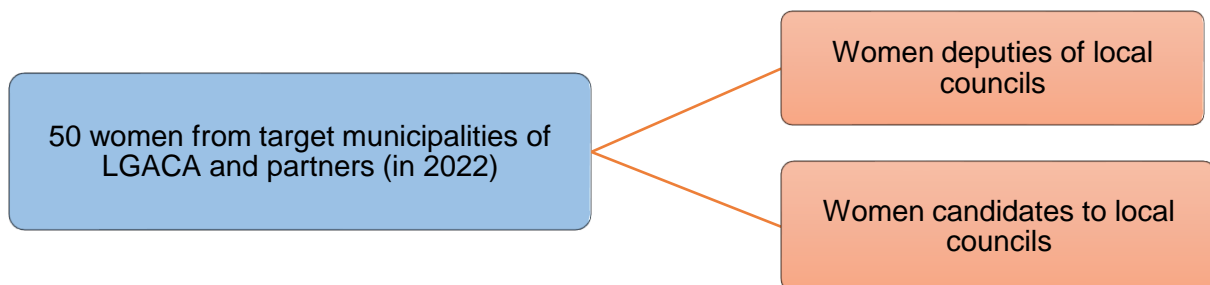
Objectives of the Club are formed on an annual basis in the form of focus areas.

In the medium term the Club will help women deputies, as well as women-candidates to deputies to increase their image in the communities, to form support groups, to implement personal deputies' plans, projects and initiatives, to be elected to local councils (for those members of the Club who plan to be nominated to local councils).

Organizer of the Club

The Club is organized by the Local Governance Academy of Central Asia⁴ (LGACA). One of the key objectives of LGACA is to build capacity of local self-government bodies, including women deputies of local councils.

Club's Target Audience



² This definition corresponds to the common understanding of the term “club,” according to which a club (from English clob or club, German club) - a place where people with common interests meet, in which the key words are “place” and “common interests.”

³ Research shows that in order to be perceived more appropriately in rural communities it's needed to temporarily avoid the terms "gender," and "gender equality," which have received negative connotations and rejected by the majority of both men and women.

⁴ The Local Governance Academy of Central Asia was established in response to the need of local self-governance in Kyrgyzstan and the countries of Central Asia to provide an accessible information and analytical resource and training for municipal officials and local communities, aimed at the development of governments and local communities. LGACA's mission is to promote local governance in Central Asia through training and providing analytical, expert, and information resources for governments and local communities.

Despite the fact that the Club was created primarily in response to women's needs, the target audience of the Club is also men - deputies of local councils, municipal officials, heads of state and LSG bodies - everyone who is interested in harmonious and sustainable development of communities, shares the values and principles of the Club, and is ready to engage in constructive dialogue about the problems that concern women, affecting families and society.

Club's Stakeholders

At launch, the Club invites any organization including commercial and non-commercial, governmental and non-governmental, domestic, international and foreign, that agrees with the Club's principles and commits to abide by them.

Organizations that support the Club:

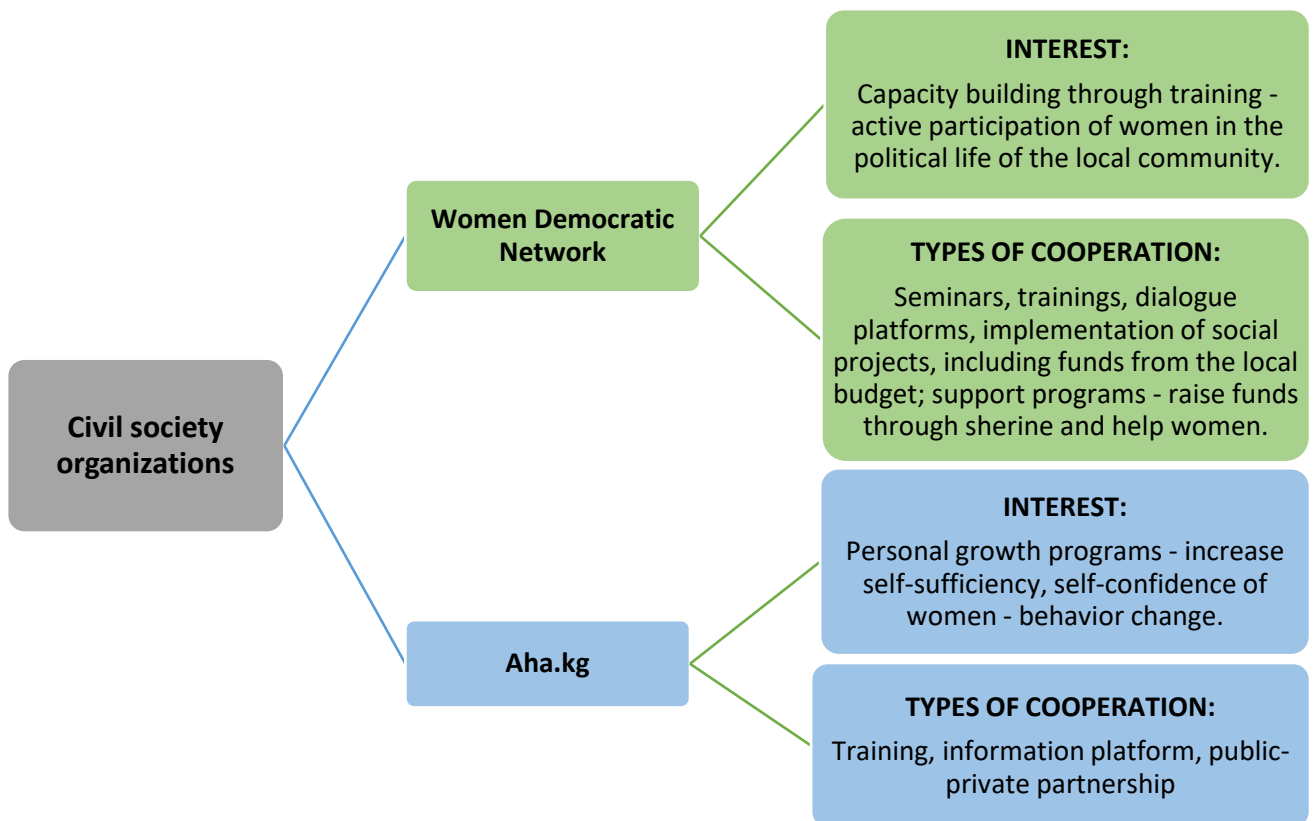
- Union of Local Self-Governments of the Kyrgyz Republic, which aims to promote the development of local self-government, represent and protect the interests of local self-governments at the central and local levels, and promote the development of the Union's members as effective and viable territorial structures.
- Development Policy Institute (DPI) is a Kyrgyz non-profit nongovernmental organization that brings together experts with many years of recognized experience in various areas of lawmaking, public and municipal government reform, local self-government (LSG) development, communities and mass communications. The DPI's mission is to assist local communities and governments in realizing their rights and opportunities to live with dignity.

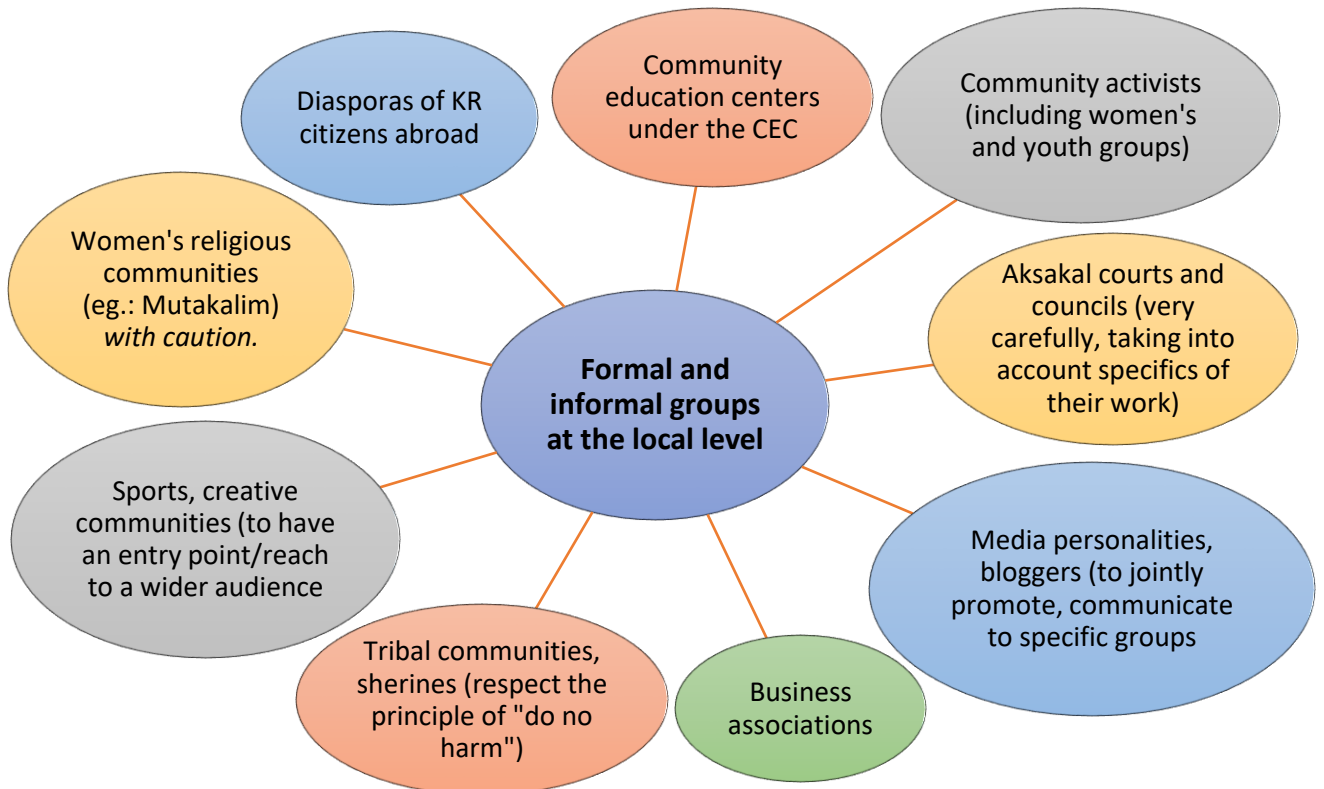
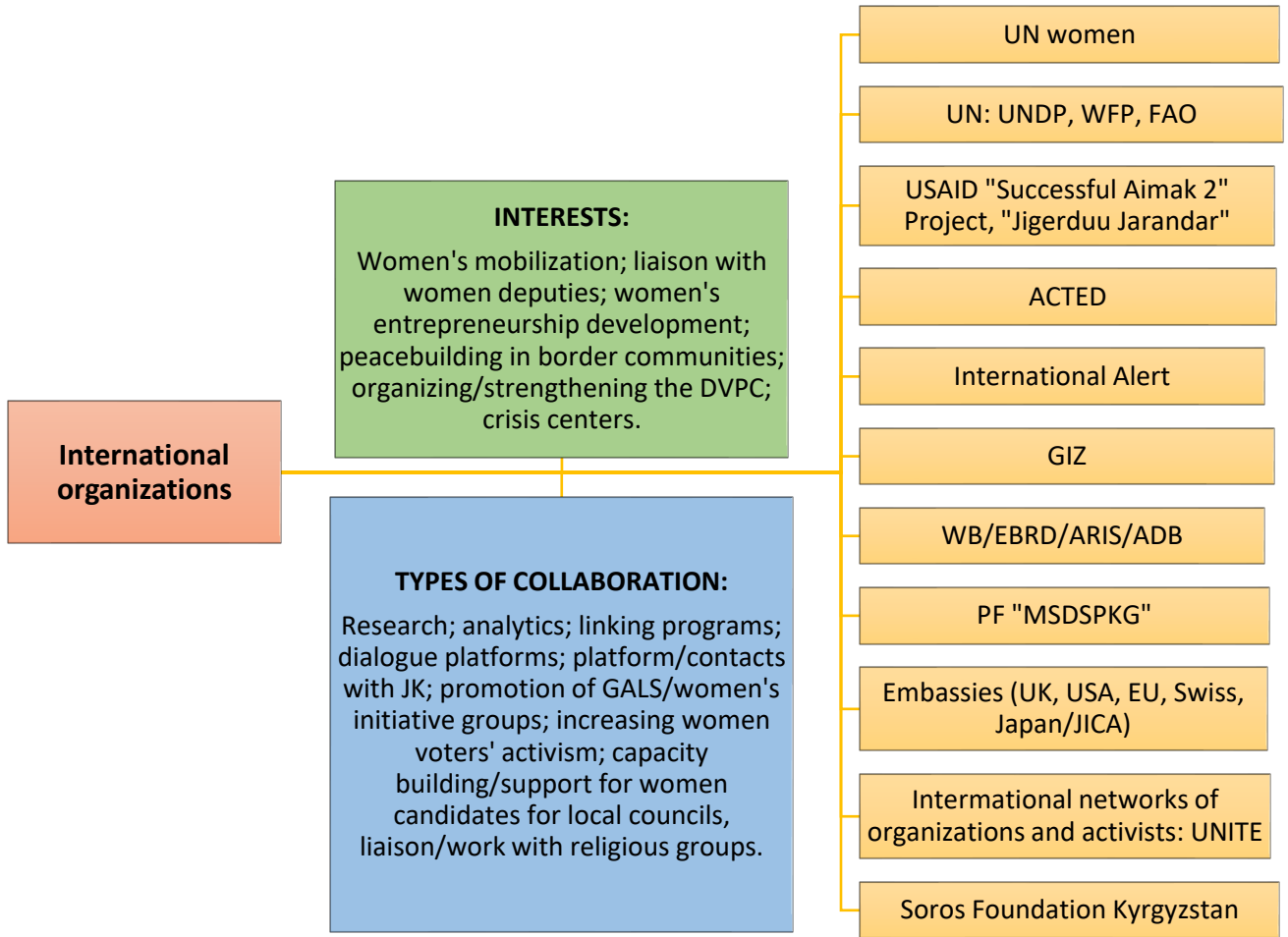
Map of the Club's Stakeholders⁵:

National and municipal levels	Interest	Type of cooperation
State Agency for Civil Service and LSG (SACSLSG)	Compliance with gender policy in the state and municipal agencies.	Joint measures to implement the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, the Concept "Kyrgyz Jarany", effective implementation of the DVPC institution.
Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration	Responsibility for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, implementation of the DVPC institute and the implementation of gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic as a whole. Development of Social Policy (support of vulnerable groups, women, children, elderly, people with disabilities).	Implementation of state and social contracts to promote gender policy at the local level. Collaboration on increasing effectiveness of DVPC

⁵ It was developed following a broad discussion of the draft Concept on July 18, 2022 with participation of representatives of the public sector, international organizations, civil society organizations, private sector and women deputies of local councils.

Central Election Commission	Provision of 30% quota for women in local councils and ensuring wide participation of women voters.	Joint informational and educational campaigns. Joint platforms of “Civic Education Centers”
Local self-governments	Ensuring the observance of women's interests in the Kyrgyz Republic. Implementation of gender policy (consideration of gender issues in the SEDP and the local budget). Implementation of policies to fight domestic violence.	Joint information and educational campaigns. Implementation of NDP at the local level, promotion of KPNS.
Jogorku Kenesh of KR	Consideration of the citizens’ interests in the development of laws in the field of gender policy.	Mentorship, advocacy.





When working with different groups at the local level, the Club makes sure to consider bilateral interest. For the Club, cooperation with the above formal and informal groups is to popularize the initiatives of the Club through communities of interest, an opportunity for the Club members to learn how the community lives, to identify the needs and requirements of different groups in the community in order to better represent the interests of these groups in the local council.

Cooperation with such formal and informal groups at the local level as: courts and councils of aksakals; religious communities, tribal communities, sherine should be built carefully, because the influence of these groups on the Women Deputies Club can be both positive and negative. For example, councils of aksakals (100% male structures) may have an a priori negative attitude to the very idea of creating the Club of women deputies. When working with them, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of their activities. Sherine with or without the participation of representatives of different tribal communities may generate injustice in society. Religious topics are very sensitive in the current context, especially in rural communities. The basic principle of the Club's work with such groups is "Do No Harm".

To more effectively promote gender equality and eliminate violence against women, the Club intends to actively involve men in its work.

For example,

- Female members of the Club will conduct a needs assessment of male deputies in their councils based on the results of which male deputies will be involved in a training program aimed at increasing the capacity of local council deputies. This will generally increase the capacity of the local council, establish positive relations and constructive cooperation between female and male deputies within the same local council.
- Female members of the Club will involve men (boys, young men, the elderly) - positive deviants⁶ who live the values of gender equality and confirm it by their behavior. This tool will maximize the chances of reaching a wide range of people in the community (both men and women), increase the potential to change attitudes and behaviors of community members regarding gender equality, restrictive social norms and violence against women.

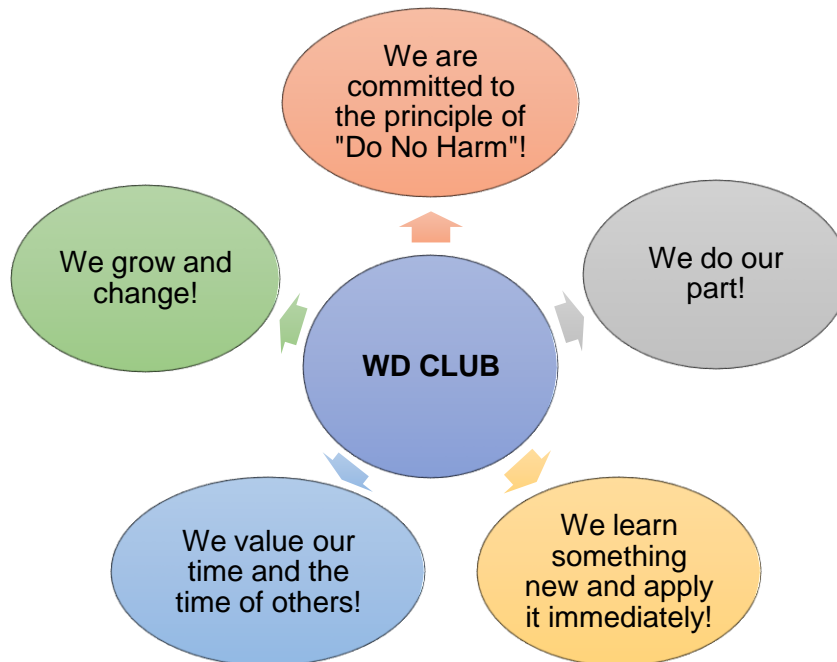
All stakeholders of the Club will be regularly informed and involved in the Club process. Especially, representatives of formal and informal groups on the local level will be involved through "practical assignments" by the Club members on the principle of "learning by doing".

Club partners will be invited to periodic Club meetings and participate in a midterm review to discuss successes, challenges and emerging opportunities, and to identify/review future Club activities. LGACA will make every effort to foster understanding and collaboration with partners that can benefit and contribute to the Club's goal, and to ensure that the Club's activities are scaled up and multiplied.

⁶ The concept of positive deviation is relatively recent. Modern sociologists often explain this phenomenon on the basis of the conclusions of such scientists as E. Durkheim, R. Merton, E. Sutherland, and others. Positive deviation is a deviant phenomenon and activity of an individual, which is of a positive creative nature. In all communities there are individuals or groups whose unusual behavior allows them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, even though they have the same limitations and resources.

Club's Principles

The Club is an open platform that welcomes any idea and endeavor that meets the following simple criteria and principles.



WE DO OUR PART!

Any initiative or idea introduced by the Club means personal contribution of the initiator in any form. All club members and participants agree to share their experiences and actively participate in Club events.

WE VALUE TIME or "LEARNING BY DOING"!

Learning by doing implies a set of training methods in which participants learn directly in the process of performing a task or solving a certain problem, relying on the basic knowledge received and their own experience. After the performance of actions, their comprehension (reflection) follows, the analysis of all decisions made, and discussion of what could be done better and what has turned out well.

WE GROW AND CHANGE!

The Club is a "live" space that transforms with the influence of desires and needs of its participants, as well as closely follows the changes in the external environment, flexibly and sensitively reacting to the trends, events and phenomena. Any club plan and event can change to best suit the moment and the audience. The club welcomes everything unconventional, new, innovative, but taking into account the principles listed above.

THE "DO NO HARM" PRINCIPLE!

No club event may be intended to intentionally or unintentionally harm any group or person. All club members and participants commit to consider each other's interests, support the principles of equality, tolerance, mutual respect and recognition of human rights and freedoms.



We want it THIS WAY!



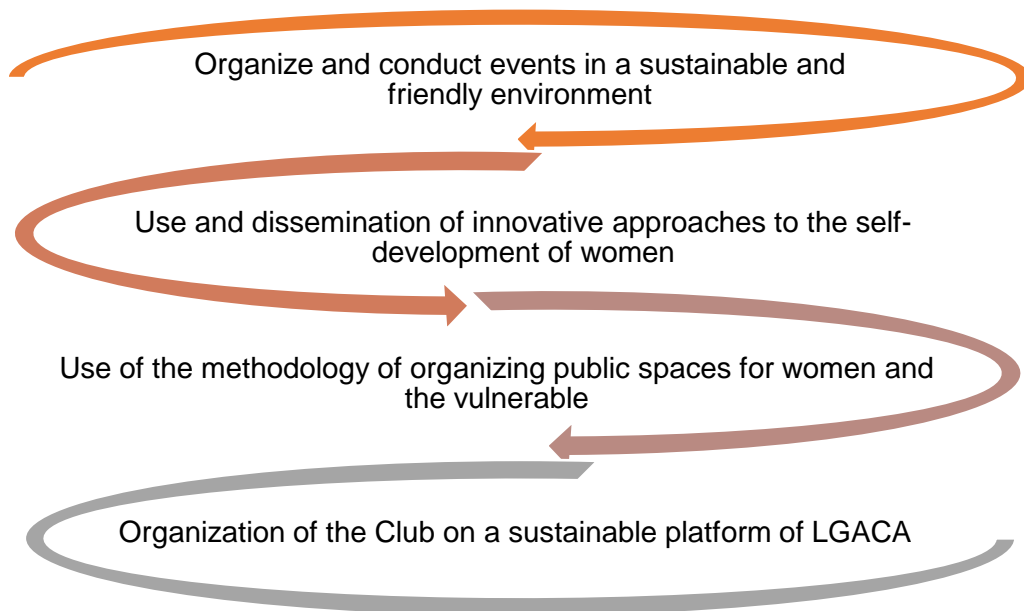
We do NOT want it THIS WAY!

WE LEARN - WE APPLY AND WE SHARE!

The club aims to ensure that the knowledge and skills obtained by its participants are applicable in practice, quickly implemented in the real activities of the audience, and that participants generously share the knowledge and skills obtained with their colleagues, partners, friends, relatives, neighbors and family members! Therefore, by joining the club, participants make a commitment to share the information, skills and knowledge received as widely as possible, using all available channels of information, including social networks.

The Club actively uses the communication channels and platforms of LGACA and partners, including the “Municipality” magazine and the Best Local Self-Government Practices Portal www.myktyaimak.gov.kg.

Club’s Unique Feature



Club's Work Forms

The work of the club is organized in online and offline formats, using various forms of events. Below is a description of the frequency and a tentative list of club events, which can be supplemented and adjusted depending on the needs of club members.

- Offline events - 1-3 times a year.
- Online events - 1-4 times a month.
- Practical events on building partnerships and coalitions, performing practical tasks - all the time, between offline and online training events.

Practical workshop

During the workshop at least 60% of the time is allocated for practical tasks that will be “pre-prepared” for their application in real work and life of the participants. In practice it will look like this: all trainings will be immediately applicable, after each meeting, the participants of the Club will receive “practical assignments” following the topic or question of the meeting. In the course of the “practical assignments” the participants will build a horizontal network among themselves. When participants find themselves in a situation where they have to do things they need to learn, it will be easier for them to remember these things. The whole process of “learning by doing” is led by a Club mentor or an experienced trainer who will encourage participants to be active on their own.

Tea talks (Chai-suiloshuu)

Or conversations over a cup of tea. These are online one-hour consultations/discussions on the topical issues for the participants. The one-hour consultation format involves discussing topics that can be covered during this time, or a large topic can be divided into parts/stages. These are periodic events held once a week, on the same day and hour. The day and time of the hour-long consultations are determined by the Club members by voting in the Telegram group. The topics of the consultations are determined based on the initial needs assessment, additionally, the Club mentor collects suggestions from the participants on a quarterly basis. Once the list of topics for consultations is agreed, LGACA invites an appropriate expert/specialist. The Club mentor asks the participants relevant questions on the topic of the consultation in advance, and the expert starts by answering the questions collected in advance, and then answers the questions received online during the consultation. Zoom online conferencing platform or live Instagram and YouTube will be used for the online consultations.

Competitive approach

Competitive elements will be incorporated into all training events. For example, experience-sharing events, including practical exercises, will include voting to select the best, most liked (applicable) experience. The participants themselves will choose a winner (or several) by voting, who will be rewarded by LGACA. Prizes are not necessarily of material nature, perhaps it will be special signs, for example “stars”. At the end of the year, the Club member with the most “stars” will receive a prize (it could be a training course, a meeting with a JK deputy of interest, a trip to exchange experiences, etc.).

#ChonO17

These are (offline and online) conferences where Club members will have the opportunity to share their experiences, stimulate communication and spread their ideas to other communities. These conferences will be organized on an annual basis, tentatively at the end of the year, with 80-100 participants. The list of speakers will be generated from the number of Club members with the highest number of “stars” during one year.

⁷ Chonoi (eskyn, enukkyn) translates from the Kyrgyz language as “to grow,” and chon oi translates as “great thought”.

Sherine (ball/evening/dinner)

Since women participants need recognition and self-esteem boosting, it is useful to have informal “get-togethers” in the evening with creative competitions (songs, for example), can be team-based, as part of the dinners as part of the offline events. These can be larger and “dress up” events - balls, or there can be “deputy evening sherine”. Such events can include practical and interesting games/exercises on personal development topics.

Communication with Club Participants



The Club's activities will be linked to the LSG Best Practices Portal and the "Municipality" magazine - all training programs and materials developed to strengthen the capacity of the Club participants will be posted on the Portal. Successful experience of the Club participants gained through practical implementation of the principle of "learning by doing" will be published on the Portal and the "Municipality" magazine. The Club's participants will also have access to other LGACA events.

Club Membership

Based on the fact that the Club is an open informal platform, membership in the Club is voluntary and open. Those women who are members of the Club's target group are free to participate in the Club's events, and can also leave the Club at any time. Those women who already have sufficient potential and experience as deputies, or those who have already increased their potential enough during their stay in the Club, can share their knowledge and successful experience with the rest of the participants as mentors.

APPENDICES

Formation of the Club's documents and event programs

All documents: regulations, plan, programs and agendas, as well as proposed ideas for tasks/activities, are agreed upon in advance with Club members and partners. Drafts of the documents/texts are prepared by the mentor/trainer/committee and sent to the club members and partners for feedback.

The program of the event is formed (depends on who is responsible):

- mentor
- coach
- instructor

based on the Club's annual plan at least 1 month before the tentative date. The draft program is sent to the participants through the Telegram group or Google listserv. Deadline of 2 weeks is set for obtaining feedback. The author of the program collects feedback from participants, makes adjustments and prepares the necessary materials. The final version of the program is sent to participants at least 1 week before the event.

The topics and format of specific training events will be developed based on the results of the needs assessment, which will be conducted on an annual basis, and will be included in the Club's work plan. Although the Club's work plan will be developed for a one-year period, even after its approval it will be possible to make changes and additions to the subjects and formats of training events. The reason for changes and additions will be the results of post-tests, evaluation questionnaires, as well as quarterly meetings of the Club participants after which the main expected results and training products will be formulated/reviewed.

Approximate scenario of online events

Basically, the online activities to improve capacity of the deputies in both professional and personal spheres will take place in the workshop format. The workshop is one of the optimal online training formats for "learning by doing", where interactive training forms are used that can be applied online. For online events, Zoom video conferencing service will be used. If necessary, a few days before the online seminars, the participants will be trained on how to use Zoom platform. They will also receive detailed instructions on how to participate in the online event: where to go, where to click, where to call if nothing works. Participants will be necessarily informed in advance (at least 2 days in advance) about what they need to prepare for the online workshop (e.g.: flipcharts, markers, pens, notebooks, colored pencils, etc.). All training materials are sent to participants via the Telegram group or Google listserv.

Each offline event should include several content elements:

- personal development assignment;
- practical consultation on a professional issue;
- exchange of information between participants about events, achievements and problems.

Workshops are organized and conducted by facilitators and mentors, the optimal number of participants is 16-20 people. Roughly, the workshop program consists of sessions lasting 1.5-2 hours. After each session, there will be breaks of 15 minutes (coffee breaks) and 1 hour (lunch)⁸.

⁸ When conducting online events, the program includes technical breaks so that participants have the opportunity to drink tea/coffee, eat or just relax. Lunches and coffee breaks are arranged by the participants themselves.

Online workshop methods:

- General discussion
- Practical work in small groups
- Individual practical work
- Speeches
- Presentations
- Homework

Practical work is done individually or in small groups using Zoom breakout session. If possible, the interactive Jamboard will be used to collect presentations of individual or group work. The Telegram group can also be used for presentations of work.

At the end of the workshop, participants will receive a homework assignment with all the instructions and deadlines. Reports on the completion of homework (including photos and video materials) are sent to the Telegram group.

Club facilitators may use a **lecture format**, which may include, presentations, video demonstrations, 3-D exhibitions, etc. The advantage of this format is unlimited number of participants and short duration. Optimal time for the lectures is 1.5-2 hours with one or two short (10-15 minutes) breaks. Disadvantage of this format is minimal opportunities for Q&A and general discussion. Recordings of the lectures are uploaded to the Telegram group, for preservation and possibility of reviewing (listening).

Master classes are one of the interesting formats of capacity building organized and moderated by participants or Club partners. As part of the master classes, participants-initiators prepare a presentation highlighting their successful experience, presumably obtained through homework (on the principle of "learning by doing"). Duration of the workshops is 2-2,5 hours (with one or two short breaks), the number of participants can vary depending on the objectives. Advantages of this format are organization of events at the initiative of participants and partners of the Club and an unlimited number of participants.

Building of partnerships and coalitions as a result of the first two focus areas of the Club to improve the capacity of the Club members in professional and personal spheres. The process of building partnerships and coalitions will be carried out in the course of practical tasks (on the principle of "learning by doing"), as well as in the process of organizing online **conferences**, the format of which implies presentations of speakers, meetings with potential partners, as well as meetings with mentors. Optimal duration of the online conferences is 2.5-3 hours with a break for a coffee break, the number of participants ranges from 50 to 100 people. **Round table** is a format that allows getting partners together and discussing concrete ideas, joint tasks and plans. Duration is 2.5-3 hours with breaks, the optimal number of participants is 20.

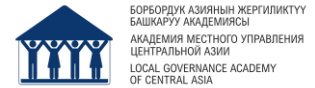
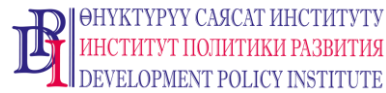
Example scenario of offline events

All the offline training events will be held in the form of **mini-schools** by a trainer with interactive teaching methods and based on the "learning by doing" principle. Mini-schools can be organized by Club mentor or LGACA staff. Optimal duration of the training: not more than 2 days, from 9.00 to 17.00, number of participants/participants - not more than 40.

Each offline event should include several content elements:

- event for personal development;
- lecture on a professional issue;
- practical lesson on a professional issue;
- coalition building exercise or assignment.

Roughly, the mini-school program consists of sessions lasting 1.5 hours. After each session, there will be breaks of 20-30 minutes (coffee breaks) and 1 hour (lunches).



At the end of each mini-school, participants will receive a practical assignment with a deadline for completion. Optimal time to complete the assignment is within 3-6 months (before the next offline training). The homework process is moderated by a mentor or Club trainer.

Google Forms will be used to collect feedback about the online and offline events, as well as interim needs assessment, with which you can ask multiple-choice questions, list a number of questions, scale questions, and more. This form can be created jointly, there is an option to add pictures to the survey. *Google Forms* is very easy to compile and fill out, can easily be shared, filled in both from computers and smartphones, quick filling in, as well as the ability to link a table with all the data of participants and their answers, and automatic collection and analysis of responses and conversion into charts are the advantages of this application.

Plan of the Club's events for 2022

Focus area 1. Increase the level of professional knowledge of deputies (men and women), including knowledge on budget and inclusive planning and management.

All topics of training events are based on the results of the needs assessment. Most women deputies who participated in the survey⁹ expect to gain knowledge they need as deputies of the local council including such topics as: basic legislation on local self-governance, planning socio-economic development programs, raising investment, etc.

All training materials will be developed by qualified trainers of LGACA who will be hired on a competitive basis, or selected from the roster/network of consultants/suppliers of consulting services of LGACA.

Mandatory requirements for trainers and consultants:

1. experience in practical work with LSG bodies;
2. knowledge of sources of additional information;
3. possession of examples of solving the problems being discussed;
4. ability to “keep” the audience, public speaking and presentation skills.

Focus area 2. Develop personal skills (soft skills) of women deputies, including innovative learning methods

This objective is caused by the necessity to improve a number of skills, among which communication and conflict management skills are the most important. Women deputies consider the development of communication and persuasion skills to be crucial for success in the parliamentary field. It is communication skills that help overcome environmental resistance, which 40% of women politicians consider to be the main problem. Internal factors are also decisive for a woman deputy on her way to success. Thus, 36% of women complain that internal fear and uncertainty prevent them from starting new and large-scale activities, for 34% of women it is difficult to manage their emotions when they face displays of unfriendliness, feel injustice, and 25% face unexpected and unpleasant reactions of people to the manifestation of their activity. Every fifth woman deputy admits that she finds it difficult to deal with conflict situations, that people often abuse her position and time, but she is unable to influence the situation. Just as importantly, the development of personal skills will help Club members start practicing a fair distribution of responsibilities within their families and get support from husbands and other loved ones.

Focus area 3. Develop skills to build effective partnerships and coalitions

Women deputies need skills to build partnerships and coalitions to implement their ideas and political initiatives, including through accurate identification of group interests with elements of political analysis of economic issues. Almost one third of women deputies complain about the inefficiency of their team members or subordinates, lack of understanding with young people. More than a half of women deputies through participation in the Club expect to find allies with whom they will carry out joint projects and initiatives.

Specific issues, on which training will be conducted, will be determined during the development and approval of the Club's work plan and clarified/refined in preparation for the events.

⁹ Conducted as part of the final Women's Leadership School event held May 14, 2022 and a google survey conducted from May 14-31, 2022.