

## HOW TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY IN PUBLIC EVENTS?



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Over the eight-year period of its activities, the “Voice of Citizens and Accountability of LSGs: Budget Process’ Project financed by the Government of Switzerland

through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by the Development Policy Institute (hereinafter - the Project), provided assistance to local communities in 41 municipalities of Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad and Chui oblasts on implementation of the Citizen Participation Model in decision making in the budgetary process. Since 2017, the Project started cooperation with 15 municipalities in Osh and Naryn oblasts. The Project carries out an active work directly with the LSG bodies providing assistance to them to ensure constitutional rights of citizens to participate in local self-government and formation of local budgets. Main goal of the Project is to increase the civic participation in addressing issues of local importance. The Project’s priority is to promote engagement of the population in the budgetary process at the local level, to create an enabling environment for building a dialogue between the population and LSG bodies.

The long-term experience of joint cooperation of the Project with the TM has revealed various kinds of difficulties that LSG bodies face when involving citizens in the budget process. A number of issues required a decision at the legislative level, while a number of them remain open. But there were also many issues that had solutions in practical terms, including the issue of organizing and holding public events. Almost every LSG body one can hear that “attendance at meetings, gatherings is low, that the population is passive and indifferent to the problems of the village/city”. Low level of participation is recognized by the authorities as a problematic issue. Especially LSG bodies are interested in full audiences during the meetings, gatherings, kurultais, etc.

Why is participation at the meetings so important for LSG bodies? First of all, the LSG body is interested in support of the population. Support is an indicator of trust, so important for those who are responsible for providing living conditions. And it is impossible to achieve trust without transparency and openness, without providing information on its activities to the general public. Participation of the population in gatherings and other public events held by local self-government bodies, where the plans are discussed, directly influence the decisions made by LSG bodies with regards the local issues. In other words, the more people are informed and involved in public activities together with the LSG body and they openly discuss and make joint decisions, the more progressive the whole community is where the main goal is to

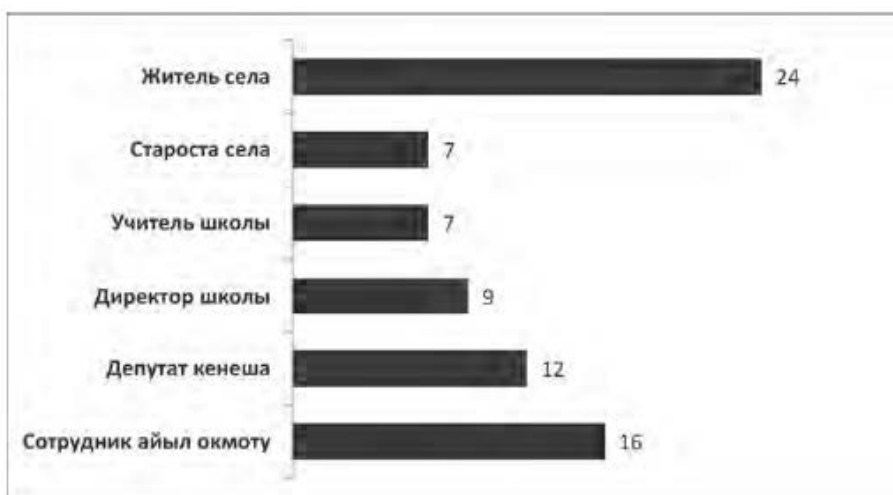


Диаграмма 1. Качественный состав презентаторов приоритетных проектов

improve the living conditions of the village and city residents.

The experience of 56 municipalities closely cooperating with the Project (target municipalities, TM) shows that the “turnout” can be increased, that the community can be involved in discussing problems, their decisions, and planning the use of local budgets to solve them.

In this article, based on the example of 15 LSG bodies in Osh and Naryn oblasts, the results of AO's work on involving citizens in local self-government are presented using the knowledge and skills obtained during training and other activities in the framework of cooperation with the Project.

## Dynamics of the citizen participation growth

After a large-scale campaign of involving the population in identifying the most priority problems in the villages, LSG bodies have developed plans for their solution - Joint Action Plans (JAP). In order to inform the public about their plans, the LSG bodies 15 of TM in Osh and Naryn oblasts held gatherings. Of course, the gatherings were preceded by the training on organization and holding of public events. The Project provided consultations and technical support in carrying out information campaigns. Municipalities were equipped with the necessary equipment. As a result of the application of knowledge, 1,725 residents and 1,204 women (totaling 2,929 people) came to gather to hear about the plans of the LSG bodies, express their opinion, and ask questions. It is worth noting that, according to the results of discussions at the meetings, the plans were adjusted, some changes and additions<sup>1</sup> were made to them. Also during the gatherings were called names of new activists to participate in the implementation of the planned and monitoring process and results.



**Diagram 2.**  
**Topics of projects proposed at the gatherings**

LSG bodies address most of the planned work and activities at the expense of local budgets. It cannot do without contributions from the residents.

However, the overwhelming majority of municipalities do not have enough in the local budgets for the larger tasks. To solve such problems, the development of municipalities requires large funds, and local self-governments are constantly working to attract investment. Appeals to local businesses, donors and development programs, to regional development funds, to the state budget (applications for incentive grants) is a constant concern of the LSG body. Design of project ideas for solving priority issues for the local community, investment projects for improving the physical infrastructure of villages and cities is not an easy task as it requires knowledge and skills. In addition to technical knowledge for the preparation of such documents, a proper organization of the process is required from LSG bodies. And here it is important to involve all possible and accessible resources in the territories. Thus, it is recommended to involve the local community in the development of the project ideas. This approach provides additional human resources, which are very limited in the LSG bodies themselves. Involvement in the development of ideas, project proposals, applications for grants, etc. gives a real opportunity for citizens to participate in the decision-making process, and then - to share responsibility for their decisions and implementation.

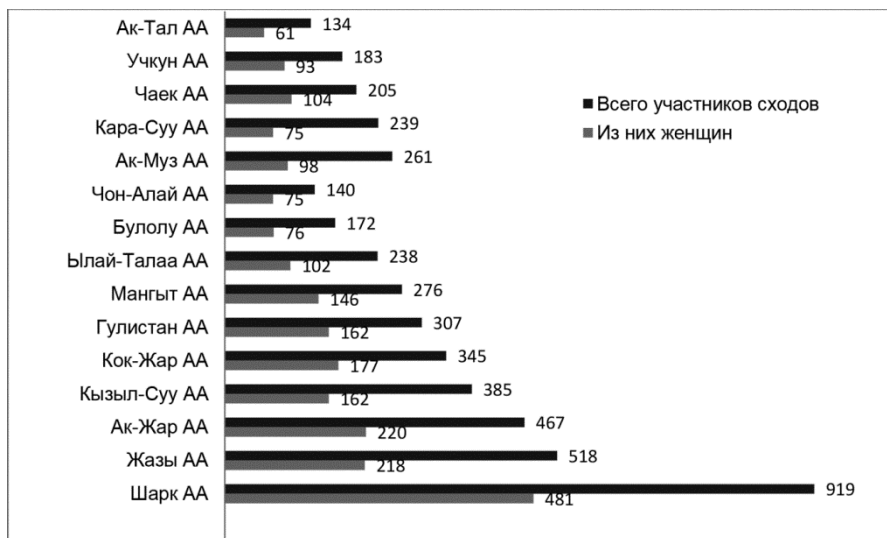
In the framework of cooperation with the Project, 15 LSG bodies jointly with the public discussed options for solving priority problems and developed project ideas for potential investment.

Proposals were developed to address 75 community priorities. All proposals had to pass public discussion to select the most important ones for the majority and realistic to carry out. The next stage in the implementation of the Citizen Participation Model was the selection of those priority problems, the solution of which was proposed in the first place, and which can be solved by attracting additional sources of financing. The grant fund of the Project was also considered as a source. Initiative groups presented the most urgent priorities and ideas for their

<sup>1</sup> See News of VAP Project in the March edition of the “Municipalitet” magazine (№ 3).

solution, while the villagers made a choice. Priorities for local communities are many, resources are limited. In this regard, the issue of the funds allocation even potential is always acute. That is why it is necessary to approach the choice of where to invest public money as openly as possible, and make the decision together with the public.

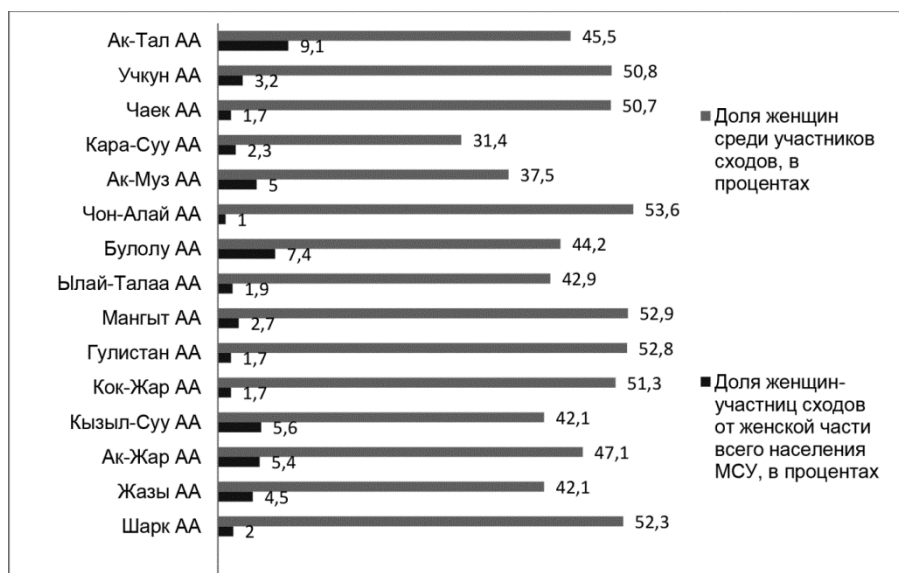
A total of 75 project ideas were presented at the gatherings at the 15 TMs. The members of the initiative groups told the public about how they see a solution to a certain priority problem, how much money is required for this, and asked residents to vote specifically for funding in 2018 to address this issue, so that this idea would form the basis of the application for participation in the Project's grant program. The composition of the presenters: 16 representatives of AO, 12 deputies, 16 heads of budget organizations, 7 headmen, and 24 ordinary residents. At the meetings, solutions of priority issues were presented, among which various issues of local importance. But the leading matter pertained to creating conditions for the younger generation: kindergartens and schools are the priority for local communities.



**Diagram 3. Participation of local communities in the gatherings**

The voting results changed the picture. Among the projects that received the majority of votes at gatherings, those that are aimed at creating favorable conditions for preschool and school education still prevailed. However, some areas were not supported by the population, for example, renovation of buildings - hospitals, ayil okmotu buildings. The number of participants in the gatherings for the selection of priority projects exceeded forecasts. About 4,798 people came to the gatherings in 15 TMs including 2,250 women,

from 134 to 919 people per municipality on average (see Diagram 3). In other words, the gatherings were attended by from 1 to 10% of the aimak population. Participation of women in the gatherings also became indicative: on average 47% of all participants in 15 meetings of TM were women (see Diagram 4).



**Diagram 4. Share of women among the gathering participants**

In comparison with 2017, the level of the citizen participation in the discussion of socially important issues has increased by more than 1.5 times. There is also an approximation to the gender balance, as the share of women increased by 8.5% (from 38.4% to 46.9%) (Diagram 5).

In the framework of the Small Grants Program of the Project, presentations on the Small Grants Program (SGP-2018) were held at the end of 2017, on the basis of which training workshops were

conducted to develop projects for all 15 TMs with the participation of AO employees and members of initiative groups (IG). The trainings enabled participants to learn how to develop project proposals on priority issues.



**Diagram 5. Dynamic of citizen participation in the gatherings, 2017-2018**

Thus, in each of 15 TMs, five priority projects outlined in JAPs were identified; brief project descriptions (BPD) were prepared for them. Final and the most main event in January 2018 was the holding of village meetings to discuss and select projects for participation in the Project’s grant program.

It was these gatherings that showed how many the joint efforts of the LSG bodies and the local community could properly plan the

organization and holding of the gatherings, ensure the maximum attendance of the population and effectively organize the gatherings themselves. How did they manage to organize the work of LSG bodies and collect a large number of participants for gatherings? How important was the activity, responsibility and initiative of citizens in the organization of gatherings? Due to what and how was it possible to ensure participation of women in the gatherings?

### Information campaign

The practice of the Project’s local consultants in 15 TMs of Osh and Naryn oblasts at the initial stage of the Project implementation showed that all LSG bodies have their own specific method of organizing and holding public events. There was no systematic approach, for example, when organizing an event, a written plan was not drawn up, the management of AO verbally instructed employees to do some preparatory activities, and sometimes asked the AK deputies to help them invite people to mass events. No preliminary organization, let alone an information campaign, was held



prior to the gatherings, and there was no control over the preparatory part. Often as a result, public events were held formally, the leadership did not know who was to blame for the low turnout.

As early as in October 2017, the Project conducted trainings on interaction of LSGs with local community: forms of public participation, meetings and gatherings of residents” for representatives of LSG bodies, local community, CSOs of all 15 TMs aimed at organizing and effectively conducting public events (gatherings, PH). Based on these trainings, in addition to the knowledge gained on the regulatory framework on citizen participation in LSGs, rules and procedures for conducting gatherings, participants developed skills in conducting information campaigns before and after the gatherings.

Using only a part of the knowledge gained at the trainings, during the preparation of the meetings to discuss the JAP, the LSG bodies were not very satisfied with the results. After the first series of gatherings, the Project specialists worked with LSG bodies to discuss turnout in order to identify weaknesses. Incomplete satisfaction with the results and discussion served as an incentive for using a wider arsenal of information campaign tools proposed by the Project. And when preparing for the second series of gatherings, the partners took into account all the lessons learned.

In each municipality, a working group (WG) was established to organize a gathering, which included employees of AO, AK deputies, IG members and representatives of the local community. The working group developed an agenda of the gathering and developed a checklist for the organization and holding of the

gathering, where all the WG members each took responsibility for an organizational matter; materials for the information campaign were prepared prior to the event as one of the main mechanisms for ensuring the public attendance for events. Therefore, first of all, AOs of 15 TMs undertook a broad information campaign for 5-10 days before the gatherings: prepared and posted banners and billboards with announcements in crowded places of each village of AA, distributed invitations to representatives of the local communities, developed press releases and sent out to regional and oblast media, on the eve of the gatherings drove through the streets of villages on cars with speakers inviting people to the forthcoming gathering. Thus, well-coordinated work of the AO staff in all 15 TMs with the check-lists influenced the attendance of the population. This is how the Project's local consultant TOLPOV Abdilboki commented on the usefulness of developing checklists: "After the training and on-site consultations, we trained the AO to work based on the check list, where all tasks and activities were clearly written (deadlines, responsible, expected deliverable, etc.). The result was that all TMs organized the preparatory part in a timely manner and effectively held two gatherings."

For example, Ak-Muz AA used its own mechanism for inviting residents: each employee was assigned to certain streets; on the basis of the printed list of residents, the AO employees collected signatures of households' heads that they were informed, could or would not be able to participate in the gathering. Thus, AO accumulated all the collected information to preliminary forecast the number of participants in the gathering. On those sites where the small participation of the population was anticipated, additionally calls and visits were made. As a result, 261 people took part in the gathering, whereas previously there were from 30 to 100 people. The same method was chosen in Ak-Tal AA and Uchkun AA, where the heads of AO divided all the employees of AO by sections and in addition to the invitations, the residents were given BPD on all five projects, which enabled the population to learn more about them and prepare questions on upcoming gatherings. It should be noted that Ak-Muz AA and Ak-Tal AA consist only of one village, and Uchkun AA is formed of two villages, therefore, it was not difficult to make visits to all households. In addition in Ak-Muz AA, an important incentive in the villagers' interest was that the gathering agenda in addition to the selection of priority projects also included an additional event – announcement of the results of the contest "Ak-Muz aiyl onukтуру-2017", where distinguished citizens and the best street were awarded. This event stimulated many residents to visit the gathering.

When organizing and conducting public events, it is important to effectively use human resources. It is especially important to remember to those LSG bodies, where people need to travel long distances to participate in the gathering. In the case of such gatherings, Ak-Zhar and Shark in Osh oblast and Uchkun in Naryn oblast took it very seriously to ensure the turnout of people. The heads of AO personally had conversations with residents who have transport, for example, in Ak-Zhar AA and Shark AA, two mini buses brought people from two remote villages, while the mini bus owner also participated in the gatherings. In Uchkun AA, employees of AO found 4 seven-seat minivans, which made 3 round trips to bring the residents of Uchkun village. Therefore, when discussing draft budget for the next year, it was recommended to the LSG bodies to consider additional expenses under "other expenses" line item for organizational issues to ensure the transportation for the residents to public events - gatherings and PH.

### Headmen of villages

The main burden in organizing mass events falls on the village headmen, who communicate with their residents on a daily basis and know more about the inner life of their village. For example, in TM Kyzyl Suu AA, Zhaz AA and Ak-Zhar AA, during the organization of the first gatherings to discuss JAPs, the AO heads set the task: every village headman to ensure a turnout of 50-60 people and after the meeting, discussions were held on the actual participation of residents of each village. For the convenience of counting, before the start of the gatherings the participants were registered by villages, which was also convenient for the future analysis – to what extent this or that village actively participates in the life of the whole AA. Based on the discussion results, the head of AO verbally encouraged or reprimanded the village headmen, which affected the results of the local community's participation in the latest project selection gatherings.

### Role of the local kenesh deputies

The AK deputies did their best, for example, AK deputies in Kok-Zhar AA actively helped: before establishment of the working group, AK deputies together with the AO employees had previously discussed the process and organization of the gathering and paid special attention to the matter of the citizens' turnout in the gathering. AK deputies met with their constituents to share information about the upcoming gathering, usefulness of the event, its main goal - to select projects to address AA's priority problems, which enables them to vote themselves. For example, in Bulolu AA 172 people (almost 20% of the adult population) gathered for the first time at the gathering, while the main role was played by close relationship between AO and AK. Out of 11 AK deputies, 8 - aged 23-25, 3 deputies - aged 40-43, all actively participate in almost 100% of public events, thus arouse great respect from AK and the AO staff. So, AK deputies held 5 organizational meetings in two villages, did a household tour to meet with householders with participation of female housewives. In Gulistan AA the chairman and deputies of AK and members of the working group visited all organizations and institutions with

large crowds of people - all schools, mosques, teahouses, etc., held on-site meetings and urged the residents of AA to actively participate in the gathering and to vote for priority problems.

### Mobile communication

Today about 80% of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic uses the mobile communication, which greatly simplifies the information process, especially in rural communities.

Most of the population uses WhatsApp though various interest groups (friends, colleagues, relatives, etc.), many groups use social networks on the Internet, mostly Facebook. Therefore, in some TMs, LSG bodies have actively used these information mechanisms. So, the AO head of Zhazy AA contacted the villagers on WhatsApp, where the group has over 250 people. Those who could not participate in -person called relatives for their replacement at the gatherings. In Ak-Tal AA coordinator DUISHOEV Urmat also used WhatsApp and invited residents, who are members of “Zharnama Ak-Tal” group, where about 50% of the total population is registered. Uchkun AA used the services of the information center “Kulanak Media”, which through on-line Twitter-blog sent SMS messages about the gathering to all with the cell phones. Member of the IG on education and youth, KYDYRALIEVA Jazgul sent an advertisement through WhatsApp to all members of “Kulanak Media” group that unites more than 40% of the village population. In addition, Ak-Tal AA and Uchkun AA have used the Internet connection - Facebook.

### Community leaders and folk traditions

Organizers in Ylai-Talaa AA chose a very interesting approach to invite people to the gatherings, for example, the village of Ylai-Talaa is very large and is divided into 7 sites that have 7 “el bashchy” (people’s lead). El bashchy are the leaders elected by the villagers who have life experience and are respected, and most importantly - they work voluntarily without any compensation. In addition, practically in all five villages of the AA, the residents are divided according to the principle of “uruu” (tribe/clan) with their “uruu bashchy” (head of the tribe/clan), then – “el bashchy” on the sites, and “kocho bashchy” (street leaders) on the streets. Thus, passing following the folk traditions of the centuries, within five-six days before the gathering, mini-gatherings were held with the participation of the uruu, el and kocho leaders, including jamaat leaders, heads of the institutions (directors of kindergartens and schools, etc.) the issue of ensuring the maximum resident turnout including women, was on the agenda.

The same approach was used in Shark AA, where they managed to gather 486 people at the first gathering, and on the second - 919 people. It turned out that in addition to aiyl bashchy (village headman) of five villages, there are 80 el bashchy who help organize various mass events. This increases the effectiveness of information exchange within the local community as el bashchy become a kind of a “bridge” between local authorities and the population, i.e. information travels quickly. The informing process takes place this way: the LSG body provides all the information to the village headmen, who in turn gather el bashchy, and then they inform the maximum number of the population. The same thing happens in the reverse process, when residents voice their problems to el bashchy, who in turn inform the village headmen, etc. As a result, each el bashchy invited up to 10 people to the gathering in Shark AA, which totaled to 800 people.

### Jamaats

An important role in the organization of the gatherings was played by the jamaats of aiyl aimaks, through which the turnout of the local community was ensured for the gathering, for example, in Mangyt AA, the chairperson of the women’s committee in aiyl aimak KARMYSHOVA Begay through her committee, which includes more than 70 AA women who have a permanent connection with each other ensured the turnout of a large number of people. They actively participate in all public events, but at this gathering the chairperson of the women’s committee asked their peers not only to come themselves, but also to bring at least 5 people. In Ylai-Talaa AA there are groups as “Jazy birimdigi”, “Ylai-Talaa Koomu”, which also took part in ensuring the turnout of the residents for the gathering.

### Heads of institutions

In addition to the standard methods of inviting the population, Kyzyl-Suu AA came up with an extraordinary method for ensuring the turnout of people for the gathering, where the AO head in a preliminary meeting with the directors of three schools and two kindergartens asked them to invite the parents of children in writing. As a result, most of the invitations were distributed through children. According to the AO head, this decision was motivated by the fact that the directors of these institutions should primarily be interested in the participation of parents, as each year the local budget funds are allocated for the maintenance of schools and kindergartens. This is a close mutually beneficial cooperation, when, if necessary, all parties should help and be interested in holding mass public events.

In Gulistan AA, various mass events were held to attract people to the gathering: in four schools sport events were specially organized, where the AK toraga and AO head were invited; the schools through high school students informed the parents; volunteers went around the sites and distributed information, separate meetings were held at each site.

### Initiative groups (IG)

Great role in the maximum citizen participation at the gatherings was played by IG created with the purpose of promoting the interests of certain groups of the population in the issues of solving priority problems within JAPs. Moreover, the selection of projects meant protecting the interests of the groups through IG; their drafts were reviewed and discussed at these gatherings. Therefore, the heads and specialists of AO first of all engaged active members of the local community – members of IG in the process of organizing and holding the event. For example, in Ak-Muz AA, Uchkun AA and Ak-Tal AA (Naryn oblast), members of all IGs were an “engine” at all stages of the event organization, helped disseminate information about the forthcoming rural gathering (hang ads on banners and posters, give out invitations and other). The IG members were interested in sharing their idea with other members of the local community and obtaining their votes for the project. Therefore, they were able to inform more of their supporters. For example, in Ak-Tal AA, IG members actively used the network of WhatsApp.

In addition, the AO heads and specialists of these municipalities were able to organize a place in the AO building, where IG members were able to present their ideas on solving priority problems, access to necessary information, for example, statistical data, and provided access to computer equipment. As a result, IGs were able to prepare brief descriptions of investment projects and work with the AO employees to develop presentations of these projects. This allowed the IG members to understand the work of AO from the inside, better understand the PP by which they worked, and also to engage specialists in this or that area where the project ideas were developed. Thus, close cooperation of AO with IG influenced the high level of citizen participation and the very process of holding the gathering to select projects, representatives of all villages were able to participate and vote for projects that affect solutions o priority problems.

### NGOs (CSOs)

Not the least role in the organization of gatherings was played by NGOs, which cooperated closely with LSG bodies. For example, in Gulistan AA such NGO organizations as “TsPGO-Nookat”, “Chernobyl”, volunteer center “Raduga” provided great help to the LSG body. Especially it is necessary to note the youth volunteer center “Rainbow”, whose members - young volunteers actively participated in the information campaign: they distributed invitations, hung ads, helped in the registration of the participants of the gathering. 24 members of the NGO “TsPGO-Nookat” and NGO “Chernobyl” that also organized a variety of meetings for the purpose of informing, distributing booklets, posters, among the general public, with the participation of the jamaat leaders, school principals, teachers, local AK deputies, and leaflets. Seven members of the NGOs together with eight active AK deputies worked separately with women in villages, held meetings at problem sites informing about the usefulness of women's participation in public events.

### Radio. Concert. Registration of participants

Since the village of Chaek in Chaek AA is a rayon center, the radio room in the central part of the village was actively used to make an announcement about the forthcoming meeting a week before the event.

The practice of organizing and holding public events in many TMs in different phases of the Project implementation confirms the effectiveness of a half-hour concert of amateur performances before the start of gatherings, meetings, hearings. This gives an opportunity to positively tune the participants, in many places it is these concerts that are a kind of outlet in the gray everyday life, and that is why many people with pleasure come early, which is also important considering the habit of the population to be late for 1-2 hours. And the concert should be at a high level, with thoughtful and prepared performances, if there is no preparation for the concert, then it is better not to expose the poor performances, otherwise from the very beginning people will be disposed negatively because of the unprofessionalism of the organizers.

With a large influx of people to public events as happened at the last gatherings for the selection of projects, often people are not registered and just pass into the hall. This problem was solved simply in Kyzyl-Suu AA and Zhazy AA. In addition to registration at the entrance, one employee of AO registered in the hall those who passed into the hall without registration. It turned out that 20-30 people were not registered due to their unwillingness to stand in line. Registration of participants in public events is a necessary process, first, for reporting and most importantly for the subsequent adoption of important decisions by LSG bodies.

### Gender policy

To date gender equality is one of the important social issues that must be addressed at all levels of life. One of the basic requirements in the process of organizing social events is the observance of gender balance. In

the course of working with the representatives of the working groups of 15 TM decided to make a separate item on the gender balance in the check-list on preparing the gathering and responsibility for the participation of women in the gatherings was assigned to individual members of the WG. At the preliminary organizational mini-meetings in some TMs, where ensuring the turnout of people was discussed, the issue of women's participation was separately raised, where also each participant was tasked to provide a certain number of people with a gender balance.

In many TMs, the organizers wrote invitations especially for women, attracted women leaders to distribute invitations, called up and walked the streets to meet with housewives. For example, informal leaders among women played an important role in Kok-Zhar AA, principally school directors, heads of kindergartens, honored teachers who initiated working meetings with parent committees of schools and kindergartens, and guardianship committees, who explained the purpose of the gathering and their role in making decisions, and distributed invitations. Thus, in Kok-Zhar AA the level of participation of the population has grown 4 times in comparison with the first gathering (86 women came to the first meeting, 345 - to the second one).

In general, the participation of women in all project selection gatherings was much higher than at the previous gathering: in 13 out of 15 TMs women's participation reached 42.1% to 53.6%, in two TMs – from 31.4% up to 37.5%. This is how the Project's local consultant, TOLIPOV Abdilboki commented: "At the beginning of the Project we expected that women's participation in Osh oblast would be very low, because of the religious views that do not welcome the participation of women in public life. But it turned out that it is necessary to use a special approach, which takes into account the local mentality, i.e. when preparing a gathering with women, only women worked with them or men they already knew, also dividing women into different groups: by age, by interests, etc. Of course, a big role was played by the fact that during all stages of preparation, at training sessions, consultations, working meetings, there was a constant discussion about gender, the need to take into account the views of women and youth. Moreover, for the selection of two projects in each of 15 TMs, 5 priority problems were selected, directly or indirectly affecting the female part of the community, this is drinking water, kindergartens, schools, etc."

Very interesting moments arose in the process of rehearsals, when full rehearsals of the project presentations were conducted with the help of the Project consultants 2-5 days before the gatherings in each TM. This was done so that the speaker could adapt to the stage, microphone, audience, etc., basically all the presenters were members of IG, and many of them had no experience of public speaking. All municipalities managed to organize not only the presence of women at the gatherings, but also their project presentations at the stage. And it is worth noting that women have coped with this task very effectively<sup>2</sup>. In some of TMs, all 5 presenters were men, but in the process of rehearsals, with the goal of keeping gender balance the presenters themselves were interested in replacing with the female presenter. Thus, gender was one of the important components at all stages of the preparation of the gathering, and it is positive that all 15 TMs undertook this task independently.

## Conclusion

Thus, most of the above methods of engaging citizens in public events are accessible<sup>3</sup> and easily applicable, but in any case LSG bodies are recommended to proceed from their local peculiarities, as the Internet or radio is not everywhere, etc. But we must not forget that the most important driving force is people, and if one organizes own work properly, a large number of active, initiative, creative people from the local community can be involved in organizing social events. If we carefully study the above methods of citizen participation in the project selection gatherings, we see that the main role was played by the great activity, responsibility and initiative of citizens represented by community leaders, jamaats, IGs and NGOs.

Therefore, all these methods are capable to work in any municipality regardless of the location and number of residents. In order to know which of these methods is most effective, an additional column can be added to the registration sheet "Where and how did you learn about the gathering or PH?" This will provide an opportunity to analyze and use in the future the most suitable method for the municipality to engage people to public events.

## Acknowledgement

VAP Project is proud of the latest achievements in 15 TMs of Osh and Naryn oblasts with a great contribution by the Project's regional representatives: TOLIPOV Abdilboki, BALTABOV Aibek, BAIBAGYSHOV Tabyldy and DOSOEV Akysbek who cooperated closely with LSGs and the local community at all stages of preparation and conduct of events.

<sup>2</sup> See the article "Women in Local Self-Government" in the March edition of the "Municipalitet" magazine (№3).

<sup>3</sup> Dobretsova N., Balakunova A., Musaeva A., Gradwal S. Public Events (Gatherings and Public Hearings) as Forms of Citizen Participation in Local Self-Government. Textbook. Available on the website: [http://vap.kg/ky/press\\_room/publications/full/134.html](http://vap.kg/ky/press_room/publications/full/134.html) (Kyrgyz) and [http://vap.kg/ru/press\\_room/publications/full/114.html](http://vap.kg/ru/press_room/publications/full/114.html) (Russian).