

**Promoting youth leadership and inter-ethnic
collaboration on security provision in
Southern Kyrgyzstan**

**Collection of Briefing Papers of Youth
Ambassadors**

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Introduction

This collection of briefing papers has been prepared under the Promoting youth leadership and inter-ethnic collaboration on security provision in Southern Kyrgyzstan Project implemented by Saferworld in partnership with the Network Civil Union “For Reforms and Result” / Alliance of Liberal Youth and the Foundation “For Tolerance International”; and funded by DRL.

The issues of youth security in communities of Osh and Batken Cities, Yrys and Suzak municipalities of Jalal-Abad Province, Tepe-Korgon and Mirmakhmudov municipalities of Osh Province are considered in the collection of papers. Conclusions and recommendations of the researches in this collection are based on the analysis of data obtained from the survey of community representatives, interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, such as representatives of local self-governance, law enforcement agencies and civil society. Also the analysis of regulatory enactments and other materials on specific issues has been made.

This collection is designed for decision-makers as well as organizations and institutions working on youth security issues. Geographical coverage of the study includes Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Provinces.

The collection of briefing papers do not reflect in any way the position of Saferworld, its partners in implementing the Promoting youth leadership and inter-ethnic collaboration on security provision in Southern Kyrgyzstan Project, funded by DRL.

Acronyms

AO – Aiyl Okmotu (village district or aiyl aimak)
ANPI – Authorized neighborhood police inspector
APK - Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan
CC – Crisis Center
CED – City Education Department
CYA - Committee on Youth Affairs under the Osh Mayor’s Office
DED – District Education Department
DIA – Department of Internal Affairs
HEI - Higher Education Institution
IAA – Internal Affairs Agencies
IO – International Organization
JAI – Juvenile Affairs Inspectorate
KR - Kyrgyz Republic
KR CC – Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic
KR FC – Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic
LCPC – Local crime prevention center
LSG - Local self-governance
LSGB – Local self-governance bodies
MSD - Ministry of Social Development
NGO – Non-governmental organization
OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA - Public Association
PF - Public Foundation
PR - Public reception under the State Inter-Ethnic Relations Agency
PW – Protection warrant
SALSGIER - State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations
SAMKR – Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic
TC - Territorial councils
TYC - Territorial youth councils
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNO – United Nations Organization
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
YC - Youth Center
YPF - Young police friend

Domestic Violence against Women in Suzak District: Appealability to Internal Affairs Bodies and Response. Author: Shakhsanam Akmatalieva

Abstract

The problem of domestic violence, low appealability of victims for their rights protection, and the methods of prevention and response in Suzak District, Jalal-Abad Province, Kyrgyz Republic are considered in the study. Conclusions and recommendations of the document are based on the data of the study which included interviews with the Internal Affairs Agency staff, crisis center employees, as well as victims of domestic violence, and focus group discussions with LCPC representatives. Also the analysis of regulatory enactments and other materials on the issue has been made.

The analytical document is intended for decision makers, individuals and organizations working with this issue. The analytical document keeps all the participants of the study anonymous. The geographical coverage of the study includes Suzak District: Suzak, Blagoveshchenka, and Askar-Ata Villages.

Introduction

In 2015, Human Rights Watch international human rights organization issued a report which stated that 28% of all girls and women in Kyrgyzstan are subject to domestic violence – psychological, physical and sexual violence. Human rights activists noted that *“the root of the problem is a combination of public indifference, non-compliance with laws and the lack of funds to support victims of physical, sexual and emotional violence”*¹.

Numerous cases of domestic violence and forced marriages which are confirmed by the research “Domestic Violence against Women in Suzak district: Appealability to IAAs and Response” are also documented in Suzak District. Interviewed victims of domestic violence say that they face pressure from family and society who make them keep silence about the violence and endure everything for the sake of preserving a family.

This issue attracts great attention of the government, scientists, the public, politicians and journalists. As the research report of the Civil Union “For Reforms and Result” in Suzak Aiyl Aimak has shown,² the number of domestic violence victims increased in 2015 as compared to 2014 and the victims are mostly women. At the same time, the government has a whole list of legal instruments designed to protect the rights of domestic violence victims.

Gender equality is enshrined in the KR Constitution.

¹ Kyrgyzstan: Authorities do not pay enough attention to the problem of domestic violence // EurasiaNet URL: <http://m.russian.eurasianet.org/node/62611> (date of publication: 05.11.15).

² Research Report – Suzak Aiyl Aimak, Jalal-Abad Province // Civil Union “For Reforms and Result” URL: <http://reforma.kg/sites/default/files/documents/suzak.pdf> (date of publication: 2015).

In 2003, Social and Legal Protection from the Family Violence Law was adopted.

In 2008, State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women Law was adopted.

To date, the problem of domestic violence against women is among the most important problems in the regions of the country, but despite this it is not studied well and requires further research. There are many different papers (scientific articles, statistics, publications, researches, reports) devoted to the subject of domestic violence. This research is focused on the problem development in Suzak District³ and studies the appealability of women to IAAs and LCPC.

The research has shown that the majority of victims of domestic violence do not seek protection of their rights. In this study, an attempt was made to identify the causes of low level of women's appealability for the protection to the law enforcement agencies and to develop a series of recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of IAAs, LCPC and other parties in this direction.

Research Methodology:

10 individual interviews with women

2 focus group discussions with LCPC members

4 expert interviews (1 police officer, 2 crisis center employees, 1 health care representative)

SECTION I: Domestic violence against women. Statistics of appealability to IAAs and LCPC

The United Nations defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.⁴

KR Social and Legal Protection from the Family Violence Law adopted in 2003 gives the following definitions of the problem⁵:

Domestic violence is a widespread form of violence which includes three main types of violence – physical, psychological and sexual violence.

Physical violence in a family is deliberate torture or beating, injuring one family member by another one, deliberate deprivation of freedom of movement, housing, food, clothing and other normal living conditions, coercion to hard physical labor of one family member by another family member, as well as evasion of parents of underage children, their guardians, persons who have taken minors

³ Suzak District is one of the most densely populated areas of Jalal-Abad Province. According to the 2009 census data, 241,198 people were living in the district. Many residents have left Suzak District for labor migration in Russia, and subsequently most of them obtain Russian citizenship.

⁴ STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF HEALTH CARE IN RESPONSE TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, COLLECTION OF MATERIALS // URL: www.health-genderviolence.org (accessed on 25.12.16)

⁵ Developing mechanisms and ensuring social and legal protection of women from violence // FSK URL: <http://women.soros.kg/index.php/ru> (accessed on 25.12.16 r.).

into foster care, from the duties of care, care for health and personal safety of minors, which can lead to damage of their physical or mental health, harm the honor and dignity of his/her personality, as well as mental, physical and personal development of the affected child victim or a death of a family member.

Psychological violence in a family is a deliberate humiliation of one family member's dignity and honour by another family member, or coercion (compulsion) of thereof by threats, insults, blackmail to commit offences or acts, which pose threat to their life or health and/or cause impairment of psychological, physical or personal development of an underage family member.

Sexual violence in a family is the act of one family member infringing upon sexual inviolability and sexual freedom of another family member, and sexual acts in relation to underage family member.

According to the staff of the crisis center of Jalal-Abad Province⁶, widespread types of domestic violence in Suzak District are physical beatings, severe injuries, limb fractures (physical abuse), sexual violence against wives by their husbands, psychological pressure, limitation of accommodation (psychological violence). The fact of accusations, abuse, and neglect by mothers-in-law or other relatives of a husband which exert even greater psychological pressure on a woman is also important. This phenomenon often provokes discord between spouses, and in the worst case, as noted by the respondents, leads to the desire of committing suicide.

Additionally, during the survey of women⁷, other causes of one or another form of domestic violence were identified, such as early, unplanned marriages, labor migration of one of the spouses, polygamy, lack of education of one of the spouses, social division of families into rich and poor.

During the interview, employees of Suzak District Department of Internal Affairs noted that the main causes of the current situation are economic instability and labor migration, which make young people leave their wives and children in order to support their families. But it is not the only cause. Influence of mentality, strong traditions of obedience of daughters-in-law to the relatives of a husband play an important role in appearing violence against women:

“Violence in one form or another is observed in almost every fourth family; up to thirty percent of all crime is committed in families. In most cases, this phenomenon is frequent in Uzbek families, where two generations and families of brothers mainly live in the same household”, an employee of Suzak District DIA said⁸.

Among IAA staff the opinion that violence is frequent in rural families is common, but in most cases it is concealed.

“In general, women are subject to psychological violence, which they often do not realize and get used to it. But it is observed in practice that because of the constant feeling of lack of self-

⁶ Interview with a respondent 26.09.2016

⁷ Interview 08.09.2016

⁸ Interview with a respondent from District Internal Affairs Department 20.09.2016

actualization and dependence, sooner or later many women still go abroad or go back to their parents”, says the respondent⁹.

Appealability to the Department of Internal Affairs

Women apply to IAAs, though not often. In most cases lawsuits are not completed because women withdraw their statements subsequently or suspend cases against their husbands.

According to the statistics provided by Suzak District Department of Internal Affairs, 425 complaints regarding domestic violence by a husband were received in 2015, but only 45 criminal cases were initiated. And for the first half of 2016 there were only 158 complaints on the basis of which only 28 criminal cases were initiated. The number of protection warrants issued in 2015 was 90, and for the first half of 2016, 76 protection warrants were issued. In addition, it was noted that the biggest challenge for the staff of the District Department of Internal Affairs was untimely submission of complaints by residents (this fact influences crime detection), and the low level of people's legal awareness. The survey of women and law enforcement officers has identified the following reasons of low appealability of women to the police:

Low level of trust between the police and people and the problems of access to police for some victims from the suburbs.

“My husband often beats me, sometimes under the influence of alcohol. But I have never applied to the police. Because it is pointless, moreover, the police station is too far away from us”¹⁰.

“The brother of my husband is working at the police; I just cannot protect myself”¹¹.

Many women have a perception that law enforcement system and other government agencies are corrupt and cannot ensure absolute safety of a woman and her children (physical, economic, social, psychological safety) in case of a divorce with her husband who has resorted to violence.

“I do not believe that the law in our country is respected. It will require a lot of time and efforts to prove his guilt and convict him”.

«I'm afraid of divorce, I'm afraid to leave my children without a father. I have often wanted to tell the police, but thinking about the consequences I was afraid. Anyway, men support each other, and I will be blamed. When my children grow up they will protect me”.¹²

Mentality¹³, traditions, pseudo-religious beliefs.

⁹ Interview with a respondent 29.09.16

¹⁰ Interview with a female respondent 15.09.2016

¹¹ Interview with a female respondent 16.09.2016

¹² Interview with a female respondent 19.09.2016

¹³ **Mentality** is a type of consciousness which a society gets from previous generations and which is gradually enriched with new information obtained as a result of human evolution. The main factors determining the type of mentality are the mentality of ancestors, influence of strong personalities and biological factors (the level of physical and mental health of a nation), and various forms of art and media, etc.

“We have inherited our mentality from ancient times; it implies obedience of women to men. Women often provoke the fury of men by their discontent and criticism. And in some families two generations or brothers’ families live together and in such families violence often occurs”¹⁴

Low level of women's legal awareness.

“I did not have time to read books for my own development, I could only attend the madrasah and learn the Arabic language following the advice of my relatives, My husband is in Russia, he comes home for 1 month during a year, he has a different family there, I cannot change anything”.¹⁵

Reluctance to discuss the issues of domestic violence in public.

“I'm scared to imagine that someone discusses my life, so it is better to keep silence. But it is also very difficult”.¹⁶

Appealability to LCPC and other parties

Local Crime Prevention Centre (LCPC)¹⁷ is functioning at the administration center of the aimak and was established in 2014 with the support from Saferworld and the Foundation for Tolerance International in order to strengthen cooperation between the police, authorities and people.

The LCPC is headed by the AO Deputy Head Ulugbek Khaidarov, 3 ANPIs are working in it. According to the LCPC representatives they have an annual plan on the basis of which they are working. In particular, the Centre together with ANPIs conducts information activities, actively involves young people in the sports events organized by the District Department of Internal Affairs, and conducts other events too.

During the first half of 2016 LCPC of Suzak Aiyi Aimak received only two written statements about domestic violence from female residents. Information about other facts of family violence comes from the representatives of women's committees who monitor the law and order in their streets.

“Women believe that our upbringing and national characteristics do not allow open discussion of the problem in the society”¹⁸.

According to health care workers and the staff of the social service of Kaniet Crisis Center, women do not know about their rights and do not take seriously other forms of violence than physical violence. Thus, the crisis center employee emphasizes that:

¹⁴ Interview with a respondent 21.09.2016

¹⁵ Interview with a respondent 21.09.2016

¹⁶ Interview with a respondent 21.09.2016

¹⁷ Local Crime Prevention Centre (hereinafter the LCPC) is a non-profit organization established on the territory of local self-governance bodies for joint participation of local self-governance bodies and citizens in crime prevention within the authority established by the regulatory enactments of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Regulations. As a rule, LCPC consists of a court of elders, women’s council and youth committee.

¹⁸ Interview with a respondent 16.09.2016

“Very few women are aware of their rights. Most of them are not aware of the fact that domestic violence is unacceptable and that they live together with actual criminals. Normally, physical and economic violence is used against women, psychological pressure is exerted. We mainly talk about physical violence and other types of violence are not talked about”¹⁹.

Many of the interviewed women expressed their desire to seek support from other women in most cases (fortune tellers, neighbors, friends, relatives and Women's Council members) rather than to turn to ANPI.

SECTION II: Prevention and Response System

Prevention and response system of law enforcement bodies regarding domestic violence is governed by the Social and Legal Protection from the Family Violence Law²⁰. Measures of social and legal protection from violence in the family established by the law are an integral part of ensuring the security of individuals, families and society. Crime against the family and minors is punished under the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic²¹ and the Administrative Responsibility Code²². Investigation and legal proceedings are conducted in a general manner.

The prevention and response system includes the issuance of protection warrants²³ and joint activities of LCPC, LSGBs and DIA. According to the Social and Legal Protection from the Family Violence Law, the tools of legal protection of women suffered from domestic violence are protection warrants, administrative and criminal sanctions. Police officers believe that the introduction of protection warrants has significantly alleviated the situation. *“The law and the method of combating domestic violence against women has become effective and the most suitable for rural women”*, the respondent says.

It was also noted that before the introduction of protection warrants victims did not go to the police with a statement or took it back in most cases, but at the moment the number of issued protection warrants shows that victims of domestic violence prefer this kind of protection.

Issuance of protection warrants does not essentially resolve the issue of guilt and responsibility, but prescribes the procedure for lawful behavior for a specified period and allows preventing further aggravation of a conflict. A protection warrant prohibits the respondent to enter into any contact with the applicant, prescribes the procedure for lawful behavior for a specified period and allows stopping escalation of violence²⁴.

¹⁹ Interview with a respondent 8.09.2016

²³ Protection warrant is “a legal document issued by a judge which imposes certain restrictions on the behavior and actions of the perpetrator of abuse”²³. If necessary, a criminal case is initiated and transferred to judicial authorities.

²⁴ Alternative Report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Russian Federation source: www.cdep.ru

Employees of Suzak District Department of Internal Affairs noted that women had started to more openly express their desire to stop violence, and since recently this method of protection has been used more in the work of the police. For example, out of 10 surveyed women, 3 women have used this method of protection. According to them, having the protection warrant they have not been subjected to repeated attacks, since after the issuance of a protection warrant their family has been under constant control of ANPI who checked the situation in the family two or three times a week.

In order to respond to and prevent domestic violence LCPC members represented by the members of the court of elders, the Chairperson and members of the women's council, as well as ANPIs go to the place of family conflict, conduct awareness raising activities. For the safety of family members they try to solve the problem on the spot, to eliminate the causes of the conflict through dialogue and call the parties to reconciliation, so that children can grow up and be raised in two-parent families. ANPI provides information to victims about their rights, the system of issuing temporary protection and court warrants. At the same time, the survey of the women's council members revealed that they were not informed about the system of protection warrants.

Representatives of the LCPC, LSG and law enforcement agencies have a joint annual action plan for the prevention of domestic violence. In 2016, they conducted two preventive activities for senior grade students of secondary schools. Basically the women's council of LCPC conducts awareness-raising activities among people about negative consequences of unplanned, early, forced marriage and the need for knowledge about their rights. In 2015, women's council members together with young activists from the youth center shot and placed in social networks a short film called "Winter Flower". The film shows the life of a young girl who often has to fight for her freedom and dream.

The Women's Council member during the conversation noted that when organizing and conducting preventive measures and awareness-raising activities they often encounter financial constraints (transportation costs, coffee break expenses, preparation of handouts), and cannot always count on the help and support of the LSGB. However, the Women's Council representatives noted that their cooperation had strengthened and they started working jointly.

Thus, although the use of protection warrants has become an effective method to respond to the facts of domestic violence and prevent further escalation, many victims and Women's Council members of the LCPC are not informed about the availability of this system of protection.

Conclusion

The conducted research confirmed the importance of the problem of domestic violence which is exacerbated in Suzak District due to the peculiarities of people's mentality. As a consequence, women are afraid to report about these facts to the police, LCPC and other institutions. On the one hand, it is related to distrust, and on the other hand, it is due to the fear of publicity and public condemnation. Refusal of victims to continue charges after filing statements has become widespread. All this complicates timely response of law enforcement agencies to such facts.

Police officers consider a protection warrant one of the most effective methods of response to the incidents of domestic violence which has become widely spread after the adoption of the KR

Protection from Domestic Violence Law. Meanwhile, its wide use is limited by the lack of awareness of women, LCPC representatives and other institutions about the tool.

It is also important to note examples of successful collaboration between LCPC and ANPIs whose activities are focused on the consideration of received applications and responses to them. The focus of their work is preserving families and strengthening relations.

In addition to the situation analysis, practical significance of the research is the fact that its results have formed the basis for recommendations. Due to the fact that recommendations are addressed to various parties, their implementation can contribute to the comprehensive solution to the problem of domestic violence.

Findings

The system of prevention and response to violence against women despite the attempts for improvement is not efficient enough;

LCPC's activities in solving this problem are limited due to underfunding and the lack of systemic support from the LSGB;

Activities of DIA are limited, on the one hand, by insufficient level of professional training of the staff, and the other hand by women's distrust and mentality;

Protection court warrants can help to protect the victims from further escalation of violence; however, the use of this method is limited by low awareness of women and general public including women's council members.

Recommendations

Suggestions of the research participants were taken into account when developing the recommendations.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Create government crisis centers in every province and systematize their operation. Engage professional psychologists into the work.

FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Create and introduce the guide / manual on reproductive development and family planning for school students of grades 9-11. It is necessary to introduce extracurricular activities devoted to early prevention of domestic violence into the school curriculum.

FOR THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Issue an order which will oblige employees of medical institutions to ask questions about violence during medical examination regardless of the character of complaints or when there is suspicion of

violence, and in case of obtaining reliable information send the interview results to law enforcement agencies and crisis centers.

FOR THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Produce short films, social videos about important problems of Kyrgyzstan including domestic violence against women.

For the Ministry of Interior and territorial units of DIA

Train ANPI employees on the methods of effective work with women / victims of domestic violence.

Create conditions for the work with victims of domestic violence.

Carry out an information campaign about existing mechanisms of their rights protection in case of domestic violence (hotline of the prosecutor's office, ombudsman, human rights organizations, protection warrants, state attorneys).

FOR THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION BODIES

Create a hotline at the Prosecutor's Office for women to call.

FOR THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE BODIES

Increase the capacity and requirements (availability of legal, psychological education, and studying the experience of other successful LCPCs) to the members of courts of elders, women's councils, youth committees, LSGB specialists on social issues of family and children.

For LSGB specialists on social issues of family and children: keep a record of facts related to violation of women's rights. Provide information to women about the problem of domestic violence.

Strengthen the work of village elders and mahalla committees in detecting the cases of domestic violence and responding effectively to them.

Organize and conduct activities (awareness raising, advocacy) in cooperation with religious institutions (mosques and madrassahs) devoted to the problem of domestic violence against women.

Actively support mass media in the coverage of the facts of domestic violence, taken measures and the work results.

Install confidence boxes for anonymous appeals.

Provide funding to run a crisis center under the social order.

Violence against Married Women in Batken: Causes and Latency of the Problem. Author: Zhazgul Kanybek kyzy

Abstract

The problem of domestic violence against women and socio-cultural factors which contribute to its manifestation in Batken Town, Batken Province, the Kyrgyz Republic are considered in the research. The analytical document is intended for decision makers, individuals and organizations working with this issue. The analytical document keeps all the participants of the research anonymous.

Introduction

Domestic violence against women in Kyrgyzstan is a serious problem which is exacerbated in the regions. According to the data of the KR Ombudsman Kubat Otorbaev, the level of violence in the families in Kyrgyzstan is quite high. During the period of 2015, a total of 3,358 facts of domestic violence were registered, 238 criminal cases were initiated on the basis of them, and 2,380 people were hold administratively liable²⁵.

The government is taking efforts to resolve the situation through improving the legal framework.

Thus, there are a number of legal instruments in the Kyrgyz Republic aimed to eradicate gender-based discrimination and violence against women. The National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Gender Equality up to 2020 and the National Action Plan to achieve Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic can be considered the most important documents.

Victims of violence have the right for the protection of their rights in accordance with:

Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Administrative Liability Code of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Social and Legal Protection from Domestic Violence Law of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Prevention and Fight against Human Trafficking Law of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In Kyrgyzstan, there are a number of agencies and organizations which provide direct assistance to women having become victims of domestic violence. They are: 1) law enforcement agencies; 2) medical institutions; 3) NGOs; 4) crisis centers; 5) IOs.

²⁵ Over 3 thousand facts of family violence were registered in Kyrgyzstan in 2015 // Gazeta.KG URL: <http://www.gazeta.kg/news/kyrgyzstan/66228-bolee-3-tysyach-faktov-semeynogo-nasiliya-bylo-v-kyrgyzstane-v-2015-godu.html> (publication date: 19.04.2016).

The research into the issue of violence against married women with a focus on the situation in Batken Town has been conducted. The goal of the research was to study main reasons of the problem and to develop recommendations for stakeholders to address the problem.

Research Methodology

During the research, field and desk information collection methods have been used: 1. In-depth interviews, 2. focus group discussions, 3. Desk research: analysis of regulatory enactments, statistical data, and publications.

The field phase of the research included conducting focus group discussions and interviews with representatives of the following groups: representatives of the Town Department of Internal Affairs, LSGB, the mayor's office, Social Protection Department, representatives of LCPC, women of Batken Town.

The field study included:

individual interviews with women of Batken Town (5 persons);

1 focus group discussion with women (5 persons);

6 expert interviews: 1DIA employee; 1 Social Protection Department employee; 1 employee of Batken town mayor's office ; 1 representative of the court of elders; 1 representative of the Women's Council; Ombudsman (Akyikatchy) of Batken Town.

16 people have been interviewed.

Section I. Influence of mentality on the growth of domestic violence against married women

Violence against married women is a social problem, it remains important in Batken Town despite the adoption of various laws, promotion of civil actions to disseminate negative consequences of violence, public discontent and call to the society for gender equality.

According to the conducted interviews, different factors can be causes of growth of violence against married women, such as ignorance of women about their legitimate rights, impact of social and cultural factors on the lives of women, old traditions which increasingly become causes of domestic violence growth. It is noted that traditions which violate women's fundamental rights exist not only in Kyrgyzstan but also in other regions of Central Asia. In particular, it is related to daughters-in-law, young women who have just got married.

According to the focus group participants, unequal treatment of men and women has become widespread in Batken Town, which leads to violations of women's rights and further to the violence against them. In addition, parents and relatives of a husband exert pressure on young daughters-in-law increasingly demonstrating the subordination of women:

“Husbands forbid their wives to go outside freely, go to work or participate in celebrations of relatives, in some families a young daughter-in-law is perceived as a maid to serve her husband's close relatives, prepare meals, do the cleaning, and do household work”²⁶.

In the interviews with respondents, a lot has been said about the “mentality”²⁷, which influences the growth of domestic violence and promotes the fact of women keeping silence. According to local traditions and according to women, young daughters-in-law must perform unquestioningly the following tasks:

Get up before anyone else does;

Clean the house, cook, work in the garden or field;

Look after children and help them in their studies;

Always respect husband's family and never contradict them;

According to the respondents, this tradition still exists in villages and towns of Batken Province. If daughters-in-law do not observe the above norms, then later this leads to conflicts:

“It will be good for a daughter-in-law herself to obey her husband, not to contradict him and to observe these norms, and then there will be no disagreement and conflicts”²⁸.

The research results show that one of the factors of increased violence against women is the above mentioned traditions. In case women do not comply with established norms, it can lead to divorce and other bad consequences.

According to the interviewed police officer, one of the reasons of conflict and disagreement between spouses which has been more frequently mentioned recently is a new provocative factor – social networks.

“In some families, there are conflicts due to the fact that women use social networks and men do not want their wives to use social networks and communicate with different people”²⁹.

In case of violence, women rarely seek help from the police or other authorities. The reason for that is subsequent public condemnation which a woman can receive.

Women are heavily dependent on public opinion. Unfortunately, public opinion plays an important role in the problem of violence, especially when it comes to violence against a married woman.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that women in spite of the violence which can be repeated over and over again, and which mainly comes out from the mentality and rooted traditions, women prefer not to talk about it. Also it happens because women do not have basic knowledge and

²⁶ According to the focus group participant

²⁷ Mentality is a range of mental, emotional and cultural peculiarities, values and aims inherent in a social or ethnic group, nation and people.

²⁸ Interview with a female respondent

²⁹ Interview with a DIA representative

information about their rights.³⁰ And this in turn leads to the fact that the number of cases of violence is not decreasing.

Section II. Latency of the problem hinders effective work of relevant agencies in the fight against domestic violence

According to the Report of the Crisis Centers Association, Social and Legal Protection from Domestic Violence Law is gender neutral and is designed to protect the rights of any family member including the affected party no matter what kind of marriage spouses have – marriage registered in the registry office, common-law marriage or marriage on the basis of traditions. Also this Law provides for the issuance of a protection warrant to prevent violence, but it does not provide for any penalty.³¹

Under the research, a request was made to the DIA of Batken Town to clarify the number of applications about cases of violence against women. It turned out that for the first half of 2016, 8 applications from women about the facts of violence against them were recorded. All the statements were considered and 8 protection warrants were issued. This does not say that domestic violence is uncommon in the town. Often, women choose not to contact the authorities for protection of their rights. Since, according to women themselves, it leads to unpleasant consequences. As an interviewed police officer noted, statistics shows that due to traditional views, many women prefer to keep silence about the acts of violence or feel shy to contact law enforcement agencies for help.

The research has found out that domestic violence in most cases remains hidden from public institutions and society. The main reasons for their reticence are fear for their lives, negative attitude from the husband and his relatives, financial dependence, worry about children, the impact of traditional attitudes and mentality. Due to the aforementioned reasons, it is difficult for DIA employees to detect and respond to the facts of domestic violence.

During individual interviews, representatives of the police, LSGB and LCPC stated that it is very difficult to prevent violence because of its reticence:

“Latency of the problem hinders effective work in dealing with this problem; women themselves do not seek help from the authorities which could help them”³².

“There are cases when women go to the police for help and their husbands begin to threaten them, saying, “I’ll kill you”, after such threats a woman is forced to take her statement away from the police. Sometimes women come with a statement, and then for no apparent reason withdraw their statements three days later”³³.

³⁰ Interview with the women’s council representative

³¹ Monitoring report: “Scale and nature of gender based and family violence in Kyrgyzstan”, Kyrgyzstan, 2009 (Crisis centers association)

³² Interview with the LSGB staff member

³³ Interview with a DIA representative

If, nevertheless, a woman has asked for help, she goes not only to the police department, but also to the women's council and the court of elders. According to the representative of the town women's council, the court of elders and the women's council have become important institutions where women can apply to if they cannot go to the police:

“Women come to us for help only when the situation becomes worse. In such cases, we can provide only moral support. Often, many women do not want to go to the police, but they need moral support”.

Thus, the solution and prevention of violence against women becomes difficult due to the latency factor. In their turn, women try to conceal violence because of traditions which do not allow them to declare this openly. It is also important to note that some studies conducted in Kyrgyzstan suggest that another factor of women not applying to the police is poor communication of police officers with women who have become victims of any kind of violence.³⁴

Findings

Unfortunately, violence against women exists in any country and does not know the limits of material well-being, race, culture and region. In many cases, the primary cause of violence against women is culture in which there are still outdated patriarchal attitudes and violence is considered to be a way of establishing discipline and order.³⁵

The problem of violence against married women in Batken Town is important. Despite repeated attempts of both governmental and non-governmental institutions, the research results show that women of Batken Town are not ready to speak openly and state about the facts of domestic violence. First, as generally indicated by the respondents it is due to the fact that it is not customary to talk about family problems, because the mentality of the society does not allow it. The publicity of such problems can show a woman in the worst light. Second, it complicates the work of relevant authorities, especially the police, in the fight with this well-established phenomenon.

Recommendations

For LSGB:

Prioritize and make the problem of domestic violence important and actively combat and prevent this problem;

Conduct quarterly trainings to enhance the capacity of women in human rights;

³⁴ Analytical document “Response to the problems identified during international investigation of the public security in KR, 2015” , 17 August 2016

³⁵ “Gender based Violence”, Z. Rybachok

Carry out awareness-raising meetings with imams about their role in the interpretation of Islamic norms concerning family relationship so that imams will conduct awareness-raising meetings for residents on Fridays about the negative phenomenon of violence against women;

Allocate a room for a crisis center for the efficient operation of the center.

For DIA:

Conduct high-quality reporting meetings for the residents about the activities conducted by DIA to address the issue of domestic violence;

Carry out preventive work with the victims of violence involving other parties in this process: LSGB, LCPC, local NGOs, etc.;

Consider assigning a position of psychologist who will advise victims of domestic violence and DIA personnel;

Organize training of DIA staff (primarily authorized neighborhood police inspectors) on the fundamentals of interaction with victims of violence.

For the Crisis Center:

Provide a psychologist / train the center's employees on the fundamentals of psychology;

Carry out awareness-raising meetings on legal matters (registration of marriage, divorce, partition of property, basic rights and duties of spouses);

Develop methodology guidelines for police officers on the work with the victims of domestic violence, conduct training of police officers on the methods;

Open self-development courses for the town women.

4. For the LCPC:

Disseminate negative consequences of domestic violence through the media;

Carry out preventive work with victims of violence and other family members involving other parties in this process: LSGB, local NGOs, imams, etc.;

Draw public attention to the importance of the problem and its solution.

School Racketeering in Batken: Negative Tendency and Measures to Overcome. Author: Chyngyz Kolchuev

Abstract

The problem of transformation of school racketeering in Batken into a sustainable negative tendency is considered in the report. Findings and recommendations of the document are based on the research data, which included interviews and focus group discussions with JAI staff, representatives of local authorities, civil society, as well as school teachers of Batken Town. Also the analysis of regulatory enactments and other materials on the issue has been made. The analytical document is intended for decision makers, as well as individuals and organizations working with this issue. The analytical document keeps all the participants of the research anonymous. The geographical coverage of the research includes Batken Town.

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is becoming an increasingly important problem in Kyrgyzstan during the recent time which requires detailed study and development of concerted action. Offenses are often committed in schools that is why they have a direct impact on the educational process. The most widespread problem among teenagers is extortion of money and other material values which has been called “school racketeering” in the society.

It may seem that this phenomenon is typical primarily for big cities. But as practice shows, school racketeering takes place in small towns such as Batken too. Moreover, its manifestations are an integral part of adolescent subculture which poses a threat of criminalization of younger generation in the long run.

Other negative consequences of school racketeering include psychological and physical harm to the victims, poor school progress, cases of theft from their parents and other relatives, conflicts at schools, etc. According to some officials, school racketeering may be one of the causes of suicide among underage children³⁶.

At the same time, state authorities, LSG and civil society start noticing the problem of juvenile and youth delinquency. New initiatives and solutions appear, and attempts are taken to consolidate the efforts of all stakeholders. However, these measures do not always include sufficient understanding of the situation, and only being well aware of the problem, it is possible to find effective solutions. This research is aimed to fill existing gaps.

The research objectives are to determine the causes of school racketeering transformation in secondary schools of Batken Town to a stable tradition of teenage subculture, and to provide recommendations for decision-makers about the tendency reduction and drawing public attention to this issue.

³⁶ Cholpon Sultanbekova believes: school racketeering can be one of the reasons for suicide among teenagers // IA "Knews" URL: <http://knews.kg/2016/05/cholpon-sultanbekova-schitaet-shkolnyj-reket-mozhet-byt-odnoj-iz-prichin-suitsida-sredi-podrostkov/> (publication date: 26.05.2016).

The research has advanced two hypotheses: the first is that low trust in law enforcement agencies contributes to school racketeering development, and the second one is that racketeering has become a way of self-actualization and a behavior model for adolescents.

The research findings have confirmed the hypotheses.

Methodology

The following methods were used in the study:

Focus group discussion with students of three schools; (the total number of participants is 30, 10 students from each school)

Survey of the students from three schools - 100 people, including 63 boys and 37 girls;

interviews with experts who are aware of this issue due to their professional activities (NGOs, MSD, LSG and teachers of three schools, 9 persons in total)

The respondents of this research live, study and work in Batken Town.

Section 1: Main causes of school racketeering and its consequences

This study has revealed that there are various mechanisms to prevent extortion at schools. During interview with a representative of the MSD, she told about a YPF and a “hidden box” at schools of Batken Town. MSD representative said, “The hidden box in schools is useful and it helps JAI employees and school teachers to work with students on the problem of violation of regulations and rights of children”.³⁷

School teachers told about the “helpline” and noted that there is a board with helpline numbers on the floor of one of Batken schools. Social

“Young police friend” (YPF) covers school students and aims: «to actively help schools in the upbringing of school students, to develop an active life position by students; to promote patriotic upbringing; to learn about forms and methods of fight against offences and crime committed by underage children, including those who study at schools; to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies in the prevention of juvenile delinquency and receiving legal knowledge by school students.³

“School racketeering: Importance of the phenomenon, nprevention and response in the Kyrgyz Republic”, CU For Reforms and Result, Bishkek, 2016, page 7

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the

first

³⁷ Interview with MSD representative (09.09.2016)

teacher said, “Students can call there all the time if they have problems with school or studies”.³⁸

Also an interview with a JAI employee was conducted. The JAI employee told about his work and said, “School racketeering prevention activities in schools of Batken are conducted at a proper level, at the same time there is a YPF in all schools who conducts his activities and there is a “hidden box” for pupils to leave their complaints or requests there”.³⁹

Despite the taken measures school racketeering exists. And the research results have confirmed that school racketeering exists. The research has shown there are several causes of the problem and the survey respondents mentioned the following main reasons of school racketeering in Batken:

Distrust of schoolchildren to teachers on various issues of concern to students

The study results have shown that not all students trust their teachers and social teachers. Students do not apply to teachers even if they worry about issues regarding school violence or racketeering. Students noted that teachers cannot solve the issues which students raise, because they have low capacity or because actions taken by teachers often do not meet the needs of children, in other words, teachers take measures without discussing the solutions with students. During the interview, experts and MSD officials of Batken Town noted that not all social teachers are qualified, since most of them combine this position with teaching the main subject.

Poor relations between parents and school administrations

During the study it was found out that the majority of parents of schoolchildren are not interested in the school life of their children. Representatives of school administrations noted that “many parents do not pick up their children from school.”⁴⁰ As a result, parents are often unaware of what is happening with their children at schools and what issues children are worried about.

School teachers answered, “Many parents do not actively participate in parent-teacher meetings and even do not attend them, just telephone and say that they agree with everything”⁴¹.

Weak capacity of JAI in prevention of school racketeering

The survey respondents indicated that JAI employees do not have sufficient experience in the prevention of school racketeering. In general, students having recently graduated from the Police Academy often become JAI employees who accordingly have no experience in prevention. This affects the efficiency of JAI and the trust to this category of police officers by students. During the

³⁸ Interview with a teacher (11.09.2016)

³⁹ Interview with JAI representative (16.11.2016)

⁴⁰ Interview with a teacher (11.09.2016)

⁴¹ Interview with a teacher (11.09.2016)

study, all the experts, i.e. representatives of local self-governance and MSD as well as school teachers have confirmed that mostly those who have recently finished training become JAI staff.

Low level of cooperation between different schools

Students of one of the schools responded that students from other schools come to them and threaten to beat them. Usually showdown between schools does not take place in school area, but in other places on holidays or during public events. Due to poor cooperation and interaction between school administrations, such conflicts remain hidden from school administrations and JAI. As a result, it is difficult for them to prevent and to respond to such phenomena.

Insufficient upbringing in a family (especially in families in which parents are working abroad)

According to the study results, it became known that insufficient upbringing in the family is one of the causes of school racketeering in Batken. MSD employees in Batken and school administrations noted that this is particularly true for the families of migrant workers whose children are out of control and attention. During the interview, MSD staff member said, “Migration affects this problem directly since control at home is weak due to the absence of their parents, and this is one of the main causes of school racketeering”⁴².

Low level of trust in law enforcement agencies exacerbates the problem of school racketeering

Referring to the survey results, it became known that problem of low level of trust of school students in law enforcement agencies is widespread. This leads to the fact that many students do not seek help from the police and do not take serious preventive measures carried out by JAI.

The majority of respondents indicated low level of trust in law enforcement agencies. During focus group discussions students expressed doubt in the ability of JAI to solve their problems. They explained that the problem may even be worse when they apply to the police, because school administration and JAI are not able to provide security to applicants so it is risky to apply to them. This problem was confirmed during the survey of students. To the question of “why do victims of school racketeering not apply to anybody?” - 22 respondents said that after application to anyone the situation deteriorates, 13 respondents answered that they “*do not trust the police officers*”.

For example, a 9 grade student of one of the secondary schools of the town said that he prefers to seek help from “his mates” rather than from JAI. He explains this by the fact that the police officers are helpless, or even can trigger more problems for applicants. One of the students’ focus group participants said: “There was a case when a student was suffering from racketeering and applied to JIA employees and the JAI staff talked with the racketeer. However, subsequently the pressure was

⁴² Interview with MSD representative (09.09.2016)

continued and became even stronger”⁴³. The respondent concluded that students do not go to the police because of the fear that violence can be repeated and because they believe that JAI interventions are useless.

During 2015-2016 academic years only 6 cases of application of students and their parents regarding the cases of racketeering were recorded in Batken Town Department of Internal Affairs. Taking into account the above answers of students, a small number of applications does not mean there is no racketeering in schools, but rather confirms the fact of low level of trust of students in the police and concealing the problem by parents and their children.

Great workload of JAI

The study has shown that one JAI staff member covers 1,800-2,200 students. Such workload makes it difficult to perform these tasks with high quality. During the study, one of JAI staff members noted that he is responsible for 2 schools of Batken Town. This means that he covers more than 2,200 students and it is really a great load for him.

Section 2: Transformation of school racketeering to a negative tradition

The study has made it possible to make a conclusion that *school racketeering has become a model of behavior and a part of teenage subculture*. This problem is taken for granted by many children both racketeers and their victims.

According to the surveyed children cash and material values can be extorted. During the recent time, new forms of racketeering has become widespread, for example, demanding to upload money for mobile communication and to pay fees for “motorcade” during holidays. Sometimes they ask to lend telephone accessories for some time but do not return them back.

Often, victims conceal from others cases of racketeering and tend to consider it a usual practice. This is indicated by findings of focus group discussions with students. The respondents consider those who moved to Baken from other parts of the province and students who attend madrasah after school as vulnerable groups.

One of the respondents, a nine-grade student mentioned that he fulfills the requirements of the extortionists fearing that the attitude of others to him will change for the worse if he does not follow the instructions of informal leaders. For example, racketeers can ask other children to avoid contact with those who have disobeyed them, thus isolating them from the rest of the team. Also physical violence and insults can follow.

According to LSG employee, school racketeering has become strong due to the fact that younger students learn how to behave among adolescents from senior students. When they grow up they

⁴³ Focus Group with students 26.09.2016

repeat what they have seen and felt themselves being victims. Through extortion, physical and psychological abuse teenagers demonstrate their power and strength.

Findings

The study of the school racketeering problem in Batken confirmed the importance to review preventive measures in this direction. School racketeering has ceased to be an isolated phenomenon; it is becoming a tendency and a part of teenage subculture. Therefore, it is possible to solve the problem of school racketeering only systemically through law enforcement and educational measures and through upbringing in the family and education at school.

The problem is exacerbated by inability of the police to work effectively with underage children combined with low level of trust in law enforcement agencies, as well as the lack of capacity and attention from JAI staff, social workers and parents to address the problem. Certain shortcomings in the activities of school administrations have been revealed who do not always properly interact with each other. Concealment of the problem from JAI, school administrators and parents explains limited effectiveness of prevention and response measures.

Recommendations

Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, Town Education Department and School Administration of Batken Town

To increase trust of students in teachers:

Increase the capacity of teachers to work with difficult children and victims of racketeering. For example, to introduce a course on psychology and mediation during the retraining of teachers.

Consolidate the efforts of local NGOs in solving the problem of school racketeering in order to provide support for capacity building of teachers and organizing preventive measures in schools.

To strengthen the relationship between parents and schools:

Use new approaches in organizing and conducting parent-teacher meetings. For this purpose it is suggested to develop methodological guidelines for the organization of parent-teacher meetings which will raise the problems of anti-social behavior including school racketeering.

Develop the work to establish relations between parental committees and school administrations, to involve the latter in organization and implementation of preventive measures.

To strengthen cooperation between schools:

Organize permanent dialogue platforms in all schools of Batken in order to discuss this issue and establish relations between them.

Show the film “Lost Childhood” prepared by the Civil Union “For Reforms and Result” during extracurricular classes.

General:

Increase motivation of students in socially useful activities (conversion of informal leaders into formal ones) through the development of school self-governance, opening clubs, discussion clubs, etc.

Department of Internal Affairs of Batken Town

To increase the capacity of JAI employees:

Introduce a training course on juvenile justice and work with difficult children for JAI on the basis of Guidelines prepared in 2015 (Ministry of Interior Affairs, League of Child Rights Defenders PF, Insan Generation PF)

Develop and implement mechanisms of planning prevention activities on the basis of analysis

To increase the trust in law enforcement agencies:

Develop YPF Institute (young police friend) in all schools through training and train YPF representatives on the YPF Institute and responsibilities of YPF representatives

Organize open days (at Town Police Department, Police Department) for the students to learn about the work of police officers

Mayor’s Office of Batken

General:

Conduct extensive information campaigns through the media for the prevention of school racketeering and enhancing cooperation between law enforcement agencies, schools and parents

The Children’s Department of Batken should prepare and defend school racketeering action plan in the town council for the purpose of allocating funds from the local budget.

Initiate interagency committee to monitor the situation at schools (Town Police Department, Town Education Department, Mayor’s Office, school administrations, parents and psychologists)

Reasons of Early Marriage and its New Manifestations. How to stop the growth of this problem? Author: Mukhambetali Mamatzhalil uulu

Abstract

This research is devoted to the problem of early marriage and the factors which affect its growth in Aravan and Nookat Districts of Osh Province. This study considers how the social environment encourages early marriage in the community. In addition, the work highlights weak interaction between LSGB, law enforcement agencies, religious institutions, school administrations in the prevention of and fight against early marriages. In conclusion, targeted recommendations are given to address the problem of early marriage.

Introduction

Currently, the problem of early marriage is one of the most serious problems in many cultures and countries. Unfortunately, the issue of early marriage growth is also important in Kyrgyzstan. This problem was suppressed in the past, but recently the state figures, media and civil society have started talking about it more often.

Events and facts when underage girls at the age of 15-16 years old who are physically and mentally not ready for a family life get married have been recorded more and more often. According to the data of the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, 13% of girls get married every year in Kyrgyzstan before attaining the age of majority.⁴⁴ And according to official statistics, in Kyrgyzstan 15% of girls get married before the age of 18, and 1% - before the age of 15 every year.⁴⁵

Early marriage leads to a variety of negative consequences such as birth of unhealthy children, divorce, conflict between family members, and negative impact of childbirth on the health of young girls. Moreover, the Ombudsman Kubat Otorbaev has rightly pointed out, *“Marriage with an underage girl has a negative impact on the education and development of girls, increases their vulnerability to various types of violence, threatens their lives and health, as well as the life and health of their children. In general, marriage with minors strengthens a vicious cycle of gender discrimination against women”*.⁴⁶ Therefore, it is necessary for more people to be aware of the problem of early marriage and its negative consequences.

Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic has adopted amendments to the Family Code and the Criminal Code introducing a ban on carrying out religious rites of marrying underage children and criminal responsibility for such acts. In the society, these changes are called *“nikah”*⁴⁷ with minors

⁴⁴The number of early marriages is not decreasing in Kyrgyzstan // Azattyk Radio URL: <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/27424930.html> (accessed on 14.12.2015).

⁴⁵ The Mufti of Kyrgyzstan has issued a fetwah to ban *nikah* for underage children <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/28191065.html> (23 December 2016)

⁴⁶Ombudsman has called to hold repeated hearings of the law banning *nikah* for underage children http://www.vb.kg/doc/340695_ombydsmen_prizval_provesti_povtorno_golosovanie_o_zaprete_obriada_nike.html (24 December 2016)

⁴⁷ Nikah is a Muslim religious marriage ceremony http://islam-today.ru/zhenshhina_v_islame/vzaimootnosenia/nikah-obrad-brakosocetania/

ban law”⁴⁸. Also recently, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly has adopted a Resolution which calls on all countries to eradicate child, early and forced marriages.⁴⁹

Taking into account the importance of the problem and the necessity to explore the reasons influencing the growth of early marriages, the research aims to study the factors of early marriage growth and early marriage transformation into a tradition for local communities. In addition, this research aims to identify new forms of early marriages and their manifestations in communities in southern Kyrgyzstan. After studying the main factors which influence the growth of early marriages, the research will examine the role and influence of key local stakeholders in the prevention of this phenomenon in the community. After analyzing local preventive measures and their effectiveness, the research will provide some recommendations to improve the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Research Methodology

This research is based on the survey of young people, interviews with representatives of law enforcement bodies, local authorities, members of the Local Crime Prevention Center and religious leaders in aiyl okmotus of Aravan and Nookat District of Osh Province.

During the research, field and desk information collection methods have been used: expert interviews, focus group discussion, questionnaires and desk research. Desk research included the study of national regulatory enactments, studies, articles and Internet resources related to the problem of the research.

The total number of respondents surveyed during the research is 128 people, including 44 parents, 74 young people, 2 representatives of local authorities, 2 LCPC members, 2 religious leaders, 2 representatives of law enforcement agencies. For the convenience and comfort of respondents, the questions were asked in the language understandable for focus group and interview participants during interviews and the survey. Thus, a facilitator asked all the questions in the Uzbek language in Uzbek communities and in the Kyrgyz language in Kyrgyz communities.

Section 1: Promotion of early marriage by social environment as one of the factors of early marriage growth

Factors influencing the growth of such phenomenon as early or child marriages are considered in this section. Basically the section studies the role of the social environment in this issue. Thus, it has been found out that early marriages are commonplace and even are becoming a

⁴⁸Expert: the law banning nikah for underage children will be effective only after the support of civil population // Knews IA URL: <http://knews.kg/2016/11/ekspert-zakon-o-zaprete-nike-s-nesovershennoletnimi-budet-dejstvenen-tolko-s-podderzhki-grazhdanskogo-naseleniya/> (publication date: 25.11.2016).

⁴⁹ All the states were called for early marriage eradication at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly // UN News Center URL: <http://www.un.org/russian/news/story.asp?newsID=27030#.WEgTvmLTIU> (publication date: 23.11.2016).

sort of local tradition in the communities where the research was conducted. For local residents it has become a norm that many girls get married at the early age of 16-17 years old. Local residents, representatives of local authorities and local crime prevention centers, and religious leaders understand the importance of the problem, are aware of the negative consequences of early marriages, but, despite this, they themselves promote early marriages.

The problem of early marriage is especially acute in communities, many girls having got married at an early age are deprived of the access to higher education and self-development, and most of them are exposed to domestic violence. Early marriages are not registered due to the fact that they are illegal, because of this in case of divorce young girls are left with their children without financial and social support. For example, one interviewed DIA employee noted that 70% of the cases considered by them in Nookat District are related to some extent to divorce and not paying alimony. And in Tepe-Korgon Aiyl Okmotu of Aravan District several cases have been identified when grown up men married schoolgirls (9-10 grade students), but then divorced them leaving them without any support with two or more children, and then married other underage girls again.

According to the interviewed representatives of LSGB, law enforcement agencies and young people themselves, mainly, early marriage is encouraged by parents. Of 68 respondents of the survey, 40 considered that mostly parents encourage early marriages, 7 participants noted that only religious leaders support early marriage, 17 respondents expressed the opinion that young people themselves encourage this phenomenon, and one respondent even noted that local authorities are interested in early marriages. It should be noted that the perception of initiators and people supporting early marriage varies depending on the ethnic composition of communities in which the study was conducted. For example, focus group discussion results show that the youth of Uzbek communities in Aravan and Nookat Districts believes that, in general, parents support early marriage, while young people from Kyrgyz communities of Tepe-Korgon AO believe that young people themselves initiate early marriage.

One of the focus group participants in Tepe-Korgon community noted that parents of a future couple agree between themselves to create a new family not thinking about the future life of their children. In their turn, groom's relatives are interested to get an underage bride who does not possess full school education hoping that a young daughter-in-law will be more docile, obedient and patient. *“The younger a daughter-in-law is the more likely it is to change her as needed”*, some respondents pointed out. This is the reason of why parents of girls are afraid that after 20 years old no one will marry their daughters or that their daughters will have to marry a divorced man who has children from his first marriage. Sixty-year female resident of Tepe-Korgon community, representative of the Uzbek community said, *“For us, it is a problem when a girl does not get married before the age of 20, after the age of 20 she is already considered an “old maid” and gets married a divorced man who has 5-6 children”*. Respondents noted that from the early age parents raise their daughters so that they can get married well. Marriage is perceived as being more important than getting secondary and higher education. The main task of parents is to teach daughters to care for her husband, for his family and children, to cook and to run a household.

According to respondents, the phenomenon of groom's parents visiting schools in order to “look” at 15-16 year-old girls has been observed in communities in recent years or in other words matchmaking of potential brides takes place for future marriage proposals. So at school there are school girls at the age of 15-16 years old who have been proposed marriage. It should be noted that due to their status of a *fiancée*, teachers treat them better. At the same time girls who have been proposed marriage are considered to be more respected among their peers. Most often, relatives of her future husband, future mother-in-law or a groom come to school to visit a girl during celebrations to congratulate her in front of other students and give her jewelry as a present. For example, in Nookat District parents and other relatives of a groom come to school specially for the *final bell* holiday and give gold chains, rings, earrings, to a bride before her classmates and teachers. From this we can conclude that community residents perceive early marriage as an absolutely normal phenomenon. At the same time teachers take no action, but on the contrary become the subjects of encouraging cases of early marriage in schools. Forty-year-old female focus group participant from Tepe-Korgon mentioned: “*Teachers cannot do anything since they themselves make their daughters get married at an early age*”. According to some government officials and religious leaders, early marriages are a family or private sphere. Therefore, they prefer not to intervene. For example, as noted by a religious leader from Tepe-Korgon community: “*It is good when girls get married at an early age, no one has punished or beat people who have married off their daughters at an early age. I consider it a positive thing*”. Early marriage is also encouraged by some employees of local authorities, for example, the aiyl okmotu employees themselves marry off their daughters at an early age. According to the Women's Committee representative, early marriages are arranged openly, and many representatives of local authorities are guests at a wedding of an underage bride. In addition to encouraging early marriages by the immediate environment, respondents also noted extreme forms of people's religiosity, as an additional factor of early marriage cases growth since this phenomenon is observed in most cases in religious communities.

According to religious beliefs girls should stay at home and be submissive, based on religious concepts a girl should be ready to get married as early as 13 years old. An ideal religious girl should even be ready to accept the fate of a second or third wife. For example, the chief imam of Tepe-Korgon community, who is about 60 years old, married a divorced twenty-year-old woman as the third wife who got married for the first time before the age of majority. Extreme religiosity as a cause of early marriage is relevant not only for Aravan and Nookat Districts, but also for other regions of Kyrgyzstan. For example, in Aktalaa District of Naryn Province parents married off their two daughters, school girls of 16 and 17 years old on the same day due to religious beliefs.⁵⁰ At the round table on the topic of domestic violence organized by Territorial Council No.3, one of the respected community elders of Sulaiman-Too community of Osh expressed the opinion that according to the rules of religion a girl should be prepared to get married at the age of 13. Such statements of elders and other influential and respected people and Imams mislead communities thus forming or influencing the system of values of ordinary people.

⁵⁰Two daughters-schoolgirls were married off by their parents on the same day in Ak-Tala // sputnik.kg URL: <http://ru.sputnik.kg/Kyrgyzstan/20161013/1029736144/ocherej-shkolnic-roditeli-v-odin-den-vydali-zamuzh.html> (accessed on 18 November).

According to the analysis of the research results, the problem of early marriage remains relevant mostly in Uzbek communities. In Kyrgyz communities the problem of an early marriage is less relevant. According to the participants of the focus group conducted in a Kyrgyz community, if a girl gets married before reaching the age of majority, negative rumors about her will immediately be spread that a girl is expecting and, therefore, is forced to get married. Thus, early marriages are perceived negatively in the surveyed Kyrgyz communities.

Given the scale and extremely negative consequences of the problem of early marriages, and realizing that early marriages have become one of the most pressing social problems recently, the government officials have initiated and adopted a number of solutions to prevent them. So, the President Almazbek Atambaev signed the Law about “Prohibition of religious marriage ceremonies without their registration in the registry office”.

From now on, according to the law, parents (or persons replacing them), a person who has committed a religious marriage ceremony, as well as a person of the full legal age who has been involved in the religious marriage ceremony, will be sentenced to the term from 3 to 5 years of imprisonment.⁵¹ Moreover, at the end of December 2016 the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic issued a fatwa prohibiting clergymen registered at SAMKR to perform *nikah* involving minors.⁵² It should be noted that prior to the adoption of the laws, many respondents expressed positive attitude towards the amendments. For example, the imam from Tepe-Korgon AO highlighted that “*neighborhood police officers have already conducted meetings to explain the law for th religious leaders, and we hope that this law will reduce the number of early marriages and prevent negative consequences of this problem*”.

Section 2: Weak interaction between LSGB, law enforcement agencies, LCPC, religious institutions, and school administration leads to an increase in the number of early marriages and appearance of its new forms

As noted above, the problem of early marriage remains important in the society. It has some negative consequences such as impossibility to obtain an official certificate of marriage registration by newlyweds, likelihood of violence in the family, lack of legal protection for both women and their children. As reported at the Ombudsman's Institute, many women, especially in rural areas, do not see a fundamental difference between the official registration of marriage and religious *nikah* ceremony. Accordingly, young women do not even know that *nikah* does not provide legal grounds for the right of inheritance and obtaining state financial assistance: alimony, allowances, benefits and pensions in case of divorce or death of a spouse.⁵³

⁵¹The KR President signed the law banning *nikah* // 24.kg URL: http://24.kg/obschestvo/40134_prezident_kyrgyzystana_podpisa_zakon_o_zaprete_nike/ (accessed on 18 November).

⁵² The Mufti of Kyrgyzstan has issued a fetwah to ban *nikah* for underage children <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/28191065.html> (23 December 2016)

⁵³ Ombudsman has called the parliamentarians to hold repeated hearings of the law banning *nikah* with underage children

For effective prevention of the early marriage problem and its consequences active collaboration of local authorities, law enforcement agencies, school administrators, and religious institutions is required. According to the Crime Prevention Law of the Kyrgyz Republic (Article 6, 18), crime prevention is carried out through the development and implementation of comprehensive crime prevention plans by the prevention actors (state authorities, local self-governance bodies, public organizations, social and prevention centers, associations, enterprises, institutions)⁵⁴.

In practice, it is observed that sometimes during Friday prayers at the direction of AO heads and for the prevention of early marriages, some clerics of mosques preach and conduct awareness-raising activities on the issue. In their turn, LCPC members together with law enforcement agencies often work with the consequences of early marriage: domestic violence, divorce proceedings and subsequent partition of property. Basically, they conduct awareness raising activities. However, according to focus group participants in Mirmahmudov community of Nookat District, conducted awareness raising activities for the prevention of the early marriage problem are not effective enough, because, in spite of them, the growth of early marriages is observed every day.

During the research it was revealed that school administrators, local authorities, LCPC, and religious leaders are not informed about the work conducted by each other. These structures operate independently from each other, and therefore there is no joint work plan to deal with the problem of early marriage. According to a teacher of Tepe-Korgon AO, local authorities do not carry out any activities to address the problem of early marriage. But parents say that school administration and LCPC members conduct awareness raising activities for the people. Therefore, it can be concluded that effectiveness of preventive measures depends on how and by whom they are conducted. In some communities where prevention is carried out in cooperation by all key stakeholders, preventive actions lead to great positive results.

For example, the research has shown that aiyl okmotu named after Mirmahmudov is a positive example of cooperation between the representatives of AO, school administrators, and LCPC members in the work to address the issue of early marriage. So, a joint prevention plan of aiyl okmotu, LCPC, law enforcement agencies, and religious leaders to conduct preventive measures of early marriages was developed and adopted in Mirmahmudov AO and all the actors conduct joint comprehensive measures. For example, LCPC members together with school administrations of Mirmahmudov AO conduct explanatory meetings with parents, organize theater performances which reflect the causes and negative effects of early marriage. Also the local council resolution of prohibiting clergymen to conduct nikah for underage persons has been effective since 2015. According to the executive secretary of LCPC of Mirmakhmudov AO, owing to all these measures the number of early marriages has decreased significantly for the past two years.

Cases of early marriages are usually recorded by authorized neighborhood police inspectors at Mirmakhmudov AO. ANPI gets this information from the prosecutor's office, which in turn

http://www.vb.kg/doc/340695_ombydsmen_prizval_provesti_povtornoje_golosovanie_o_zaprete_obriada_nike.html
(24 December 2016)

⁵⁴“Prevention of offences in the Kyrgyz Republic” dated 26 January 2015 № 26 the web site of the KR Ministry of Justice.

receives the information from the medical staff of maternity hospitals. However, the practice of cooperation with medical institutions is not observed everywhere. For example, it was reported in Osh regional maternity hospital that they inform the police only when a girl herself asks to report to law enforcement agencies. As noted by the medical staff of the regional hospital, such cases are exceptional, because girls are not ready to talk about their problems due to the mentality of local people and the fear of condemnation by the society.

But the practice of interaction between local authorities, law enforcement agencies, medical staff, LCPC members and religious leaders contributed to the decrease of early marriage cases at Mirmakhmudov AO. According to the local police officer, 30 early marriage cases were registered at Mirmakhmudov AO in 2015, and only 2 early marriage cases were registered in 2016. This means that in comparison with the previous year the number of early marriage cases has significantly reduced. Thus, it can be concluded that in the communities where all the stakeholders including LCPC, LSGBs, DAI, imams and medical staff jointly work together to resolve the problem of early marriages the decrease in the number of early marriages is observed.

Conclusion

The problem of early marriages is increasingly discussed in the society. The growth and the scale of this phenomenon attract the attention of a growing number of people and decision-makers. Two main causes of the problem of early marriages growth have been considered in this study, which covered only two districts in southern Kyrgyzstan (Aravan and Nookat Districts). Thus, the research results have revealed that the number of early marriages is increasing due to the widespread promotion of the phenomenon by the social environment of “newlyweds” and their parents. Respondents have repeatedly emphasized that early marriage is not perceived as a problem. Therefore, teachers, local AO staff and other influential people marry off their daughters before the age of majority.

It is interesting to note the fact that the perception of early marriages in communities with different ethnic composition differs radically from each other. Thus, the majority of respondents from Uzbek communities said that early marriages are the norm for their environment. But respondents from Kyrgyz communities, on the other hand, noted that people are forced to get married at the early age only because of extreme forcing circumstances such as, for example, pregnancy. Accordingly, the reasons inducing or forcing underage girls to get married are different. The participants of interviews and focus groups in Uzbek communities emphasized the desire and the influence of parents on their children when they get married at an early age. Whereas in Kyrgyz communities the respondents explained early marriage only as the desire and decision of young people going to take this step.

According to the research data, the other major factor of the early marriage growth is extreme religiosity of future spouses, their parents and the community in which they live. Thus some cases discussed in the study describe marriage before the age of majority on the basis of religious beliefs. In such cases, imams and revered elders of communities play their negative role by interpreting the

religion in their own way, and even urging parents to marry off their daughters at the age of thirteen. The study briefly touched upon the case where an imam of one ayil okmotu married a divorced twenty-year-old woman as his third wife who got married for the first time before the age of majority. This event is presented in the community as an act of mercy in relation to the young woman, *“it's better to be the third wife rather than a divorced woman”*.

The cases from only these two districts in southern Kyrgyzstan show the full scale of the problem of early marriages and its new manifestations. To effectively solve the problem of early marriages growth it is necessary to conduct active joint preventive work by all stakeholders: local crime prevention centers, religious leaders, local authorities, law enforcement agencies, school administrations and medical institutions. Only in the case of interaction between all the above actors it possible to have the most effective impact on the problem. The example of Mirmakhmudov Aiyl Okmotu described in the study proves the feasibility and effectiveness of joint prevention work on the problem of early marriage growth by all the stakeholders. This practice should be carefully studied and extended to other areas where the problem of early marriage is are also quite widespread.

Recommendations:

The Education System: City and District Education Departments:

Organize regular extracurricular classes for senior grade students and open days for students and parents on this issue.

Local state administration:

Conduct information campaigns (videos, talk shows) highlighting negative consequences of the problem of early marriage through the media.

Establish cooperation between imams of local mosques, law enforcement agencies, ayil okmotus, and LCPCs.

Local authorities:

Initiate the development of joint plans of ayil okmotu, LCPC, law enforcement agencies, religious leaders in dealing with the problem of early marriage and develop a monitoring and evaluation system for the prevention work.

Conduct awareness raising activities about the negative consequences of early marriages among general public and young people.

Carry out information activities about the importance of education and motivation meetings for young people and parents.

Law Enforcement Agencies:

Regularly provide information about preventive measures at the reporting meetings and village meetings.

Together with local authorities, monitor law enforcement practice, the law prohibiting a religious ceremony nikah for minors. Results of the monitoring should be announced publicly.

Establish close cooperation with local health care institutions to identify cases of early marriage.

Initiate raids in collaboration with local authorities and mosques to identify imams working without proper registration and authorization from SAMKR.

State Commission on Religious Affairs

Develop a system of re-training of imams and religious leaders on job, include the questions related to the capacity of imams regarding early marriage into the attestation procedure.

SAMKR and Kaziyat

Include the questions regarding this issue into Friday sermons.

Youth of Suzak District: Perception about Themselves, the Country, and the Future. Author: Dilnoza Nishanova

Abstract

The issues of awareness of young people from Suzak District, Jalal-Abad Province about the state policy on strengthening inter-ethnic relations, in particular, about the Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan are considered in the research. The research work studies in which activities conducted under the Concept implementation Suzak youth participated and how young people perceive the image of a “Citizen of Kyrgyzstan” presented in the Concept. In addition, the research addresses the issues of self-identification of young people of Suzak and their vision of the future. The analysis is based on the responses of young people from different ethnic groups, SALSGIER and LSG of Suzak District which were received during the survey, interviews and focus groups.

Introduction

It has been exactly six years after the tragic events of 2010, but at the community level in southern Kyrgyzstan there is still latent distrust between ethnic groups, there is a feeling of fear or scare that ethnic conflict can be repeated despite the efforts of the state and international projects to improve inter-ethnic relations. This manifestation in the society is more often observed among young people.

The role of each institution and each citizen is important in strengthening inter-ethnic relations. Support and development of youth by local self-governance bodies are an integral part of the development of any state. In addition to the efforts of local authorities, the role of the government in resolving socially important issues of the country is of particular importance. Measures to strengthen inter-ethnic relations are taken in Kyrgyzstan. Such measures include the Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic which was adopted on 10 April 2013 and the plan of priority actions for the period of 2013-2017 to implement the Concept. The State Concept was adopted under the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017.

At the time of the research the Plan to implement the Concept has not been accomplished yet. Therefore, it can be noted that by the example of Suzak District the Concept has not been implemented at a large scale, because the awareness of youth about the content and essence of the Concept, and about the implementation of measures under the Concept is assessed as insufficient or weak.

The research is aimed to determine the perception of young people from different ethnic and cultural communities of Suzak of the Concept and to determine the attitude of young people to the image of a “citizen of Kyrgyzstan” presented in the Concept, and to describe the attitude of youth to themselves, that is, to determine how the youth of Suzak identify themselves.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this research work may be interesting for the representatives of public authorities and local self-governance bodies which are involved in the implementation of state policy in the area of strengthening interethnic relations and youth development.

Methodology

The research covers four ayil okmotus of Suzak District: Yrys, Suzak, Tash-Bulak Kyzyl-Tuu AOs. Of these, Kyzyl-Tuu, Yrys and Tash-Bulak AOs are considered to be Kyrgyz communities in the research, and Suzak, Yrys and Tash-Bulak AOs are considered to be Uzbek communities.

A total of five expert interviews with representatives of Yrys, Suzak, Tash-Bulak Kyzyl-Tuu AOs and representatives of Suzak District SALSGIER were conducted.

The survey of 68 young people, representatives of Suzak, Yrys, Tash-Bulak and Kyzyl-Tuu AOs aged from 16 to 25 was conducted. 10-16 people were surveyed in each of the AOs. The survey included 11 questions.

Also two focus group discussions with young people from different ethnic groups in the following four AOs were conducted:

1. Atabekov
2. Kyzyl-Tuu
3. Suzak
4. Yrys

The desk research included the review of regulatory enactments of the Kyrgyz Republic, articles, Internet resources and other materials about the subject.

The Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has taken a number of immediate measures to improve inter-ethnic relations during the post conflict period in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Such measures included the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017. On 10 April 2013, in order to implement the section of the Strategy “Ensuring inter-ethnic harmony and strengthening the unity of people” the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic about the State Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan was issued. This concept includes a number of plans, implementation of which was entrusted to the SALSGIER.

The Concept defines principles, goals and objectives which are aimed to strengthen inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan and to preserve cultural heritage and ethnic diversity of the country. In other words, the concept aims for people to show and keep respect for each other not resorting to disputes and conflicts in the country where representatives of more than 80 different ethnicities live by improving education, culture, ethics, and through creating the necessary infrastructure in the center and in regions.

The basis of the expectations from the Concept implementation is to unite the efforts of all government bodies and every citizen to achieve the unity of people and to jointly confront the factors which inhibit the formation of civic identity of “A citizen of Kyrgyzstan”.⁵⁵

The Concept Implementation Plan was developed in order to implement the State Concept for the implementation of which 204 million soms⁵⁶ has been allocated from the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

According to the 2009 census 241,198 residents of 8 different ethnic groups live in Suzak District. Among them, 147,662 people are Kyrgyz, 83,551 people are Uzbek and 8,922 people are representatives of other ethnicities. At present, many residents have left the region for labor migration as noted by the majority of young people. There is a large number of young people among the migrants, which in turn shows low participation of youth in the development of the region.

The survey shows that many respondents from Suzak District who are students of higher educational institutions are interested in developments in the political and economic life of the country. They also include young people who are employed at the labor market – they are less interested in politics and are engaged in self-actualization.

SECTION I. Implementation of the Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan in Suzak District of Jalal-Abad Province

Awareness and perceptions of the State Concept by young people

The implementation of the Concept in Suzak District began after the adoption of the Plan to implement the Concept in 2013. According to representatives of LSGB and SALSGIER in Suzak District, a total of 3 events have been implemented in Suzak District as part of the plan to implement the Concept. 2 children's playgrounds have been built in Suzak Village as the first two events. These measures have been implemented under the project “Strengthening trust between people, communities and authorities” with the support from the UN Peacebuilding Fund. The project was implemented in partnership with government agencies and public organizations such as SALSGIER, the Institute of Ombudsman (Akyikatchy) of the Kyrgyz Republic, Abad PF, PF For Tolerance International, and PA “Justice” Jalal-Abad Regional Human Rights Organization⁵⁷. In 2015 SALSGIER also allocated 250,000 soms to organize and conduct a festival of friendship in

⁵⁵http://www.president.kg/files/docs/kontseptsiya_ukrepleniya_edinstva_naroda_i_mejtnicheskikh_otnosheniy_v_kr.pdf

⁵⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yY-FRntXh0&t=1157s>

⁵⁷ <http://unpbf.kg/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/unhcr.pdf>

schools of Suzak and Kara-Suu Districts of Osh Province devoted to strengthening inter-ethnic relations. 500,000 soms was allocated for the preschool educational institution “Dewdrop” in Blagoveschenka Village for preparation of children's national costumes of different ethnic groups as the third event.

In addition, other activities including information and sports events, concerts, flash mobs to strengthen inter-ethnic trust among people and to build trust between the communities and authorities have been implemented as part of the joint plan of LSG and LCPC.

Thus, the Plan of the Concept implementation in Suzak and in other regions in the south of Kyrgyzstan has been implemented for the international grants and by such organizations as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, OSCE and others. SALSGIER acted as the main partner in implementing international projects aimed to support the Plan of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan Concept implementation. SALSGIER also presented itself in Suzak as a “sponsor” in the implementation of local initiatives to strengthen the friendship of peoples, such as festivals of friendship, and to support cultures of peoples living in Kyrgyzstan. On the one hand, this demonstrates that SALSGIER is a coordinating and leading agency on inter-ethnic relations, but on the other hand, this shows that the SALSGIER presents itself mainly as a “sponsor”, rather than an “implementer” which the agency should be according to its status.

Awareness and perception of the State Concept by Young People

The research has shown that the majority of respondents representing LSG of Suzak District are not familiar with the content of the Concept, but have heard about it. Most of the surveyed local authorities recognize that in practice there is a hidden problem of distrust between people of different ethnic groups in Suzak District, especially among young people. In this regard, local authorities understand the importance of conducting regular preventive, motivational and educational activities for people in order to prevent conflicts. As noted during the interview, Suzak LSG has its own action plan which they prepare every year. Some of the interviewed LSGBs have been working with people on inter-ethnic relations for 4 years. In particular, they organized various activities for young people: sport games aimed at strengthening patriotism and support of education among young people, building inter-ethnic friendship and protecting young people from recruitment to different religious movements banned by KR legislation. Also, meetings with the participation of elders, women and youth were organized.

According to the results of the survey of young people, there are those who are informed about the concept, and those who have heard about it for the first time. For example, the majority of respondents from among young people who are aware of the State Concept are university students in Jalal-Abad aged 17 to 20 years old. Many of the interviewed young people who do not know about the Concept are either migrant workers who work in Russia or other countries aged from 19 to 25 years old, or vocational school students (for example, in the area of technical skills and construction).

As a result of the survey 21.43% of respondents from the Kyrgyz communities in Suzak indicated that they are aware of the State Concept. While 39.29% of the respondents have heard about the Concept but are not well aware of its content. The remaining 39.29% of the respondents indicated that they did not know and had not heard about the State Concept.

More respondents from Uzbek communities as opposed to the respondents from Kyrgyz communities are aware of the Concept and their number makes up 25% of the total number of respondents. 35% of the surveyed Uzbek youth noted that they had heard about the Concept, but are not well aware of its content. The remaining 40% of the respondents from Uzbek communities know nothing or have not heard about the State Concept.

Thus, as a result of the survey it has been identified that of all the respondents from the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, 46.43% are aware of the Concept, its content, activities and objectives of the implemented state program, whereas 74.29% of the respondents have heard something but are not fully aware of the document. And 79.29% do not know anything and have not heard about the State Concept of “Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan”.

Similarly, the results of focus group discussions in Suzak communities have shown that many participants from among young people have not heard about the Concept, but have stressed that the issue of improving inter-ethnic relations is important for the preservation of peace and prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts. Namely, 80.3% of the focus group participants indicated that they were not aware of the Concept.

The Concept also presents the ideology or image of a “Citizen of Kyrgyzstan”, which describes a “multilingual, well-educated, open to innovation and contacts” citizen⁵⁸. It has been determined that 46.9% of the total number of focus group participants did not possess any information about the image of a “Citizen of Kyrgyzstan”, although the image was perceived by young people as a positive image. During the focus group discussions, young people of Suzak responded as follows:

“We live in a civilized world where globalization processes are under way. That is why most people in the world speak 2 or 3 languages. As for Kyrgyzstan, the law has been adopted according to which the Kyrgyz language is defined as a state language and Russian is defined as an official language. In practice, because of the language issue misunderstanding and conflicts happen among the youth. But I believe that in addition to the mother tongue, we need to know Kyrgyz and Russian languages at the appropriate level in order to become a full-fledged citizen of our country”.

“SALSGIER need to continue maintaining clubs for learning Russian and Kyrgyz languages in Uzbek schools. Upon completion of language courses it is necessary to issue certificates as motivation for young people so that in the future they can actively continue developing oral and written speech. I can say with confidence that the majority of Uzbek youth will be interested in these clubs, because after obtaining a certificate or a confirming document they will have a change for the better and develop self-confidence”.

⁵⁸http://www.president.kg/files/docs/kontseptsiya_ukrepleniya_edinstva_naroda_i_mejtnicheskikh_otnosheniy_v_kr.pdf

All the representatives of youth who participated in the survey and focus group discussions of the research evaluated the availability of the Concept as a very positive indicator. Young people are glad that the Kyrgyz government is taking steps to improve and maintain friendly inter-ethnic relations between different ethnicities living in Kyrgyzstan.

One of the focus group participants in Suzak noted:

“I am very pleased that our government is attentive to this issue. If we, the citizens of Kyrgyzstan, want to live in a developed and rich country, we should be not only smart, but also fair, able to keep the peace, harmony and tolerance to other ethnic groups living in our country. If the society is tolerant and harmonious, then we can build a developed society”.

Mainly the students of Grade 9, 10, 11 and active young people represented by volunteers and informal leaders from among the youth participated in the activities to improve inter-ethnic relations and to strengthen the unity of people implemented by SALSGIER. As noted by young people during focus group discussions, activities organized by SALSGIER are important especially for school children, so that they can build friendly and more integrated relations before they enter higher education institutions of the country where the environment is mainly multiethnic.

Moreover, students from Suzak were little aware about the activities of SALSGIER, and, accordingly, did not take part in the multi-cultural events, since the main audience for SALSGIER activities was school students. Specifically, 14.29% of respondents from among the youth surveyed in Kyrgyz communities indicated that they had not participated in the activities of SALSGIER. While in Uzbek communities only 12.5% of respondents informed they had not participated. Almost the same number of Kyrgyz (35.71%) and Uzbek youth (37.5%) stated they had not participated in the activities to strengthen the unity of people and inter-ethnic relations. 39.29% of respondents from among Kyrgyz youth indicated that they had not participated in the SALSGIER events, but would like to participate in them in the future, while 35% of respondents from Uzbek communities have indicated the same.

Thus, despite the fact that the respondents stated that they had participated in the various activities conducted to improve inter-ethnic relations, the majority of respondents did not have any information about the Concept - the respondents have not heard that this document was adopted in Kyrgyzstan.

In their turn, representatives of SALSGIER mainly referred to the funding problems as the cause of poor awareness of young people and the LSGB about the Concept or about the work of SALSGIER on the ground. In addition, during the research, poor cooperation between the LSGB and SALSGIER in practice was revealed, since no joint work plans were prepared. Each of the institutions was working according to their individual plan.

As noted by the respondents of Suzak District, LSGB mainly works with the 10th Division, Suzak District Internal Affairs Department and National Security Service to resolve the issues of inter-ethnic relations. In other words, LSGB works more with defense and law enforcement agencies which represent government agencies, rather than with SALSGIER. In addition, the respondents

from LSGB responded that in many cases, AOs of Suzak District work with international projects and programs on inter-ethnic relations. They mentioned such local NGOs and international organizations as FTI, Saferworld, ARIS, UNDP, UNICEF and DIA. According to the respondents, for LSGB it is more beneficial to work with non-governmental organizations and international projects, since according to them it gives them more benefits than the work with government authorities.

SECTION II Self-identification of the youth in Suzak

In this section, the issue of self-identification of the youth in Suzak District has been studied. The options of the suggested answers included such statements as (1) self-identification as *a citizen of Kyrgyzstan*, (2) self-identification on the basis of *ethnicity*, (3) *other* self-identification.

In Kyrgyz communities, the youth identified themselves as follows. 71.43% of all the respondents identified themselves as citizens of Kyrgyzstan, 25% responded that they are Kyrgyz, self-identification by ethnicity, 3.57% of all respondents identified themselves by religion, that is they marked themselves as Muslims indicating this in the box “*other*”.

Different data has been received in Uzbek communities during the research. For example, as opposed to Kyrgyz communities, the number of respondents who identified themselves on the basis of religion is relatively more - 12.5% identified themselves as Muslims in the box “*other*”. 35% of all the respondents responded that they are Uzbeks, i.e. self-identification by ethnicity, and 52.5% identified themselves as citizens of Kyrgyzstan.

The majority of respondents who identified themselves as Kyrgyzstani or citizens of Kyrgyzstan are school students in Suzak or university students in Jalal-Abad aged 16-19 years old. Those who identified themselves as members of a particular ethnicity were mainly migrants working in the field of trade at the age of 18-25 years old.

Furthermore, the respondents answered the question: *How do you see yourself in this country in the future? What have you done and what do you want to do in the future for the sake of Kyrgyzstan?* Answers of young people vary, but it is possible to observe a tendency that those respondents who identified themselves on the basis of an ethnic group did not answer the question. Whereas young respondents who identified themselves as citizens of Kyrgyzstan, answered the question as follows “I want to help people”, “I want to make my country rich”, “I want to bring at least small benefit for my country”, “I want to be a teacher, to provide quality education to young people”, “I want to be a worthy representative of my country”, “I want to get good education in a foreign country and use this knowledge in the Kyrgyz Republic”, “I want to become a good doctor and help people be healthy”, “I want to serve for my country's security, keep calm and harmonious relations between neighbors, and call everyone to peace and order”, “I want to contribute to the establishment of a just state”, etc.

Young people from Suzak, more from Uzbek communities see their future in Kyrgyzstan (75%), while most of young people from Kyrgyz communities see their future outside

of Kyrgyzstan (57.15%). When asked about where young people want to build their future, the respondents gave the following answers:

Respondents from Kyrgyz communities:

42.85% - in Kyrgyzstan

17.86% - in Russia

14.29% - in America

21.43% - in Turkey

3.57% - in Europe

Respondents from Uzbek communities:

75% - in Kyrgyzstan

5% - in Russia

5% - in America

12.5% - in Turkey

2.5% - in Saudi Arabia

Young people from Kyrgyz communities mentioned the following factors or reasons which prevent young people in Suzak from development: mainly young people cannot develop because of the lack of support from the older generation (28.57%), due to the lack of effective state policy to support young people (25%) and due to the lack of access to quality education (17.86%).

Whereas young people from Uzbek communities responded that three main factors prevent them from developing, they are mentioned in a descending order: the lack of information about where and how they can fulfill themselves (30%), lack of support from the older generation (22.5%) and lack of access to quality education (20%).

On the basis of the data, a statement can be made that Uzbek youth as opposed to Kyrgyz youth do not possess the information about existing opportunities for self-actualization in their community (e.g., sports clubs, language clubs, existing educational exchange programs and available vacancies, etc.). In addition, in both ethnic groups, there is great dependence on their parents and other representatives of the older generation, which is likely to be explained by traditional and cultural characteristics of the two ethnic groups, such as obedience and respect for elders, etc. One of the respondents noted, *“My parents hinder my development as they constantly exert their influence and pressure on me”*.

In general, based on the results of the survey among Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth in Suzak it can be concluded that less than half of the representatives from among the surveyed young people identify themselves and identify others on ethnic grounds. More than half of all surveyed

young people identify themselves and their peers as citizens of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the research data shows that a new trend of self-identification of young people on the grounds of religion, in particular self-identification as a *Muslim* has appeared. This phenomenon is probably due to the fact that people practicing Islam in the region became younger as compared to what was 10 years ago.

Lack of motivation and support from parents along with lack of information often lead young people to the state of indifference for their future and the future of the region in which they live.

Findings

Kyrgyzstan takes measures to strengthen inter-ethnic relations after the conflict in 2010 through the implementation of the State Concept on “Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic” effective until 2017. By the example of Suzak District, it can be concluded that the Concept has not been implemented at a large scale, because awareness of youth from Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, some representatives of LSGB about the content and essence of this Concept, as well as implementation of activities under the Concept is assessed as not sufficient. Most representatives of young people surveyed in Suzak do not have information about the Concept of Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-ethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic. Even taking part in some of the activities within the framework of the Concept implementation, such as friendship festivals, young people did not understand why the events were conducted and who the organizer of this event was. It was just funny and interesting for them to participate.

Concerning self-identification of young people, the survey findings in Suzak have shown that less than half of the representatives of the surveyed young people identify themselves and identify others on ethnic grounds, and more of them identify themselves and their peers as citizens of Kyrgyzstan. This is a very good indicator despite the fact that the image of a “citizen of Kyrgyzstan” whose popularization was provided in the framework of the Concept was not widely known among young people (46.9% do not know about it). In addition, the research data has shown that a new trend of self-identification of young people on the grounds of religion, in particular, self-identification as a *Muslim* has appeared.

Recommendations

SALSGIER

To strengthen the work of SALSGIER in awareness raising about the Concept, work plans, timeframes and conducted activities in the framework of the Concept among people, especially young people.

To continue the promotion of the image of a “Citizen of Kyrgyzstan” among youth.

To strengthen partnership and mechanisms of interaction between SALSGIER and LSGB (for example, through joint plans for the inter-ethnic relations development).

To continue the operation of language clubs to learn Kyrgyz and Russian languages in Uzbek schools of southern Kyrgyzstan. To have an opportunity to issue certificates to students after the completion of a language course as an incentive for young people.

To act more as an active “implementer” rather than a passive “sponsor” of the activities devoted to inter-ethnic relations.

LSGB, local council deputies

To allocate funds for LSGB to conduct joint activities with SALSGIER on inter-ethnic issues resolution and prevention.

To introduce a position to work with young people and inter-ethnic relations into Aiyl Okmotu structure.

To carry out close work with parents to support young people in their independent choice and development under the AO position to work with young people and inter-ethnic relations.

To carry out information work with young people from Uzbek communities to disseminate information about existing opportunities for self-development and self-actualization under the AO position to work with young people and inter-ethnic relations.

Effectiveness of NGOs' Efforts in Strengthening Inter-ethnic Relations in Osh. Author: Nematillo Osmanov

Abstract

Effectiveness and limitations of the efforts of NGOs and youth associations to strengthen inter-ethnic relations in the city of Osh after the inter-ethnic conflict in 2010 are considered in this analytical document. The analytical information is provided for decision-makers and all concerned persons and organizations working to improve inter-ethnic relations. The analytical document keeps all the participants of the research anonymous. Geographical coverage of the research includes Osh City.

Introduction

After the events of June 2010 trust among young people from different ethnic groups to each other has weakened and negative stereotypes have been strengthened. Government agencies and NGOs have implemented numerous initiatives aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic relations among young people and other population groups since 2010. As a result of peacebuilding initiatives implementation conflict potential between different ethnic groups has decreased significantly.

Thus for example, 6 years after the conflict information about inter-ethnic clashes appears less and less often in the public space and the city life is gradually returning to a peaceful course. However, various studies show that the conflict potential has not been fully exhausted and mistrust exists among some people⁵⁹. During the clashes of 2010 young people of both ethnicities were the most active participants⁶⁰, a similar situation was observed during the riots 20 years ago⁶¹.

In order to avoid repetition of tension interest in further support of initiatives aimed at inter-ethnic tolerance and reduction of conflict potential is natural. When seeing what is happening, the question arises, "Why is the problem still acute among young people despite the implementation of various projects for young people?" Articles about the success of projects are published at the web sites of various NGOs owing to which young people of different ethnic groups have no problems in their interactions and relationship. But having analyzed the information which has been received from NGOs and real stories about young people's lives, it can be concluded that projects have a number of limitations and their overcoming can lead to increased effectiveness.

In this report, the author tries to evaluate the effectiveness of the efforts of NGOs and youth organizations in strengthening inter-ethnic relations in the city of Osh. The impact and scope of the methods used to bring together Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth have been analyzed. The study results are

⁵⁹ Osh. The life after the conflict // Cabar.asia URL: <http://cabar.asia/ru/osh-zhizn-posle-konflikta/> (publication date: 15.06.16).

⁶⁰ Osh, June 2010: Conflict's anatomy // Azattyq URL: http://rus.azattyq.org/a/osh_enthnic_clashes/2093626.html (publication date: 08.07.10).

⁶¹ Riots in the Kyrgyz town of Osh. Chronicle of events // Arguments and Facts URL: http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/file/besporyadki_v_kyrgyzskom_gorode_osh_hronika_sobytyiy (publication date: 04.06.15).

grouped according to the main findings. The final part provides recommendations for the development of a more effective approach to working with young people.

Research Methodology

In the course of the study field methods of collecting information were used: interviews and focus groups.

The field phase included conducting focus group discussions with young people who had previously participated and had not participated in the projects aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic relations in communities of Amir-Temur and Manas Ata.

In addition, interviews were held with the following respondents: NGOs (IRET PF, ISEDA PF, Youth of Osh PF, FTI PF) and CYA, APK, 10th Division of DIA, TCs, Amir Temur and Manas Ata TYCs.

Section 1: Initiatives of youth associations and NGOs have contributed to closer relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth

After the inter-ethnic conflict of June 2010 in Osh, non-governmental organizations implemented many projects during the period from 2010 to 2015 aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic relations among young people. As reported by the interview participants from among NGO representatives, the conducted initiatives included trainings, volunteer initiatives, organizing camps for young people, activities to increase the participation of young people in decision-making and their creative potential and creating conditions for interaction between young people of different ethnicities. Educational activities on mediation and conflict resolution have become widespread.

For example, IRET Public Foundation (PF) implemented the projects “Promotion of youth councils’ sustainability through capacity building and development of cooperation among young people in Kyrgyzstan”⁶², “Capacity-building and promotion of cooperation among young people in Kyrgyzstan”, “Messengers of Peace” (all three projects implemented with the support from OSCE). The projects were aimed at strengthening the capacity of youth, multilingual education, effective participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Foundation for Tolerance International PF has implemented the project “Strengthening the role of youth in conflict transformation”⁶³, under which drama clubs have been created on the basis of forum theater methodology in Osh and Jalal-Abad Provinces (with the support from UNICEF). Forum Theatre Methodology has become an effective tool to teach the skills of conflict prevention

⁶² New project of Iret: Strengthening the Capacity of Youth Councils // advocacy.kg URL: <http://www.advocacy.kg/index.php/2491-23-marta-2015-novyj-proekt-iret-ukreplyat-potentsial-molodezhnykh-sovetov> (accessed on 23 March 2015).

⁶³ FTI promotes “Youth Theater for Peace and Dialogue” // advocacy.kg URL: http://www.advocacy.kg/news/2012/14_02_13_2.htm (accessed on 14 February 2013).

and strengthening tolerance, building leadership capacity of project participants⁶⁴. Another project “Tolerance is the road to peace” was aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance in the border communities (also with the support from UNICEF). Under the project clubs of tolerance were established in schools of Osh and Batken Provinces, whose activities are aimed at strengthening interaction between young people from different ethnic groups⁶⁵.

Youth of Osh NGO has also implemented a number of initiatives including “Youth Volunteer Clubs” in secondary schools where there is a risk of conflict (under the Jasa.kg Program of the International Youth Center with financial support from USAID). Activities aimed to develop civil engagement of young people through strengthening the capacity of 22 youth volunteer clubs and the promotion of the idea of volunteering were carried out under the project. The PEACE Project has also been implemented which was aimed at promoting ethnic equality and increasing civic participation among young people of Kyrgyzstan through the development of creative potential of young people (with support from European Union in the Kyrgyz Republic and DVV International). Under the project, more than 500 young people from different creative directions were selected for further training and practical sessions. Opportunities were created for the participants to reveal their creative abilities and self-expression, to find new friends and like-minded people and to achieve success in their creative work.

Youth committees of Osh conducted cultural events aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic relations, for example, the Friendship Festival under the slogan of “Friendship, Peace, and Unity”, “We are Different but Equal”. Sports events, exchange visits with young people of different ethnicities were conducted. These activities were organized jointly by the Committees on Youth Affairs from 12 territorial councils of Osh. In addition, cultural and sports events to bring together young people from different ethnic groups were conducted.

The results of focus group discussions and interviews with young people and community leaders indicate that the implemented projects have contributed to the positive change in the opinion of young people about a different ethnic group. The focus group participant of 16 years old said, “*In the past, I looked at the Uzbeks with hatred, but after participating in the project, I changed my opinion about them, met Uzbek guys who participated in the project, we became like brothers with them*”. Focus group participant, 17 years old said, “*When the project was finishing we did not want to part with new friends, we got used to each other, we have made friends with many guys of different ethnicities*”. “*Thanks to the project I got acquainted with new friends of other ethnicities. I was so used to the new friends that I cried after the project ended, I did not want to part with them*”. The post-project period was also mentioned. For example, a focus group participant said, “*After the project ended we met with the project participants and conducted various activities*”. A nine-grade student said, “*After the project ended we got together and played football*”.

⁶⁴ Project Evaluation Report: “Strengthening the role of youth in conflict transformation (Stages 1 and 2)” // (accessed on 15 February 2015).

⁶⁵ Forum “Tolerance is a Road to Peace” // advocacy.kg URL: <http://www.advocacy.kg/index.php/653-26-noyabrya-2013-forum-tolerantnost-doroga-k-miru> (accessed on 16 November 2013).

Positive changes in behavior were noticed as a result of the projects, many of the participants started to prefer non-violent methods of conflict resolution, for example, mediation techniques application. Representative of the Foundation for Tolerance International noted in the interview that representatives of “difficult” youth were involved in the youth projects implementation, and they began to use non-violent methods of conflict resolution and actively participate in school activities and called upon others for friendship after their participation in the trainings on the fundamentals of conflict resolution with forum theatre techniques.

According to APK representative inter-ethnic relations among young people have improved as a result of projects implemented by NGOs, state and other relevant agencies. The APK representative noted that NGOs have implemented many projects because of good financial opportunities and their special approach in strengthening inter-ethnic relations.

Amir Temur TC Head noted, *“Inter-ethnic relations among young people have improved by 60%, but the problems remain, they are mainly observed between adults”*.

According to the interviewed representatives of the APK and the 10th Division of Internal Affairs Department of Osh city, the implemented projects have had an effective impact and as a result the feeling of patriotism among young people has increased.

At the same time representative of the 10th Division of the Osh City Department of Internal Affairs said that it takes time to evaluate the work of NGOs with youth, *“It can be evaluated after 10 years, it is necessary to wait until young people grow up. It is too early to provide evaluation now”*.

The study has shown that the majority of implemented initiatives both by NGOs and TYCs aimed to strengthen inter-ethnic relations have contributed to establishing closer relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth. According to the majority of surveyed young people, the events of this kind have become a platform for interaction between young people, reduction of inter-ethnic tension, increase in patriotism, promotion of the idea of tolerance among young people.

It should be noted that frequently criticized cultural and sports events have also had a positive effect. A focus group participant, a 16-year-old student said, *“During the Festival of Friendship we showed dances of different ethnicities, we learned to speak openly, we saw how other participants supported us when we were shy to talk or made mistakes”*. Another focus group participant said, *“We witnessed a huge change, because in the beginning of the project, we and other participants did not know each other, but by the end we opened up to each other as if to our family”*. According to one more focus group participant, they try to influence their surroundings, *“Yes, we told about it to our friends and they took it positively and were very interested”*.

Section 2: Projects to strengthen inter-ethnic relations have limited coverage of youth

School and university students, active youth, leaders, athletes, as well as inactive youth, “difficult” youth, the unemployed participated in the projects implementation. The most common ways of

attract participants were surveys, collecting letters of interest, through school administrations, JAI, social networks, District Education Department, City Education Department, universities, etc.

According to existing criteria, many of the projects were aimed to create sustainable groups composed mainly of leaders, activists, and youth previously not involved in such activities. Each group consisted of 8 to 15 people. For example, under the IRET project, the youth committee included 30 people, drama and volunteer clubs under the projects of PF “For Tolerance International” consisted of 15 people, etc. It is noted that about 3 persons of so-called inactive youth were included into the project sustainable groups.

Judging by the method of selecting youth to participate in projects, the priority was given to active youth representatives. This is due to the fact that this group of young people has access to social networks, is able to fill out questionnaires, and the rest of young people in the majority of cases were indirect participants of projects, for example, audience of theater performances, festivals, casual participants of various games, actions, media campaigns, and public events.

According to respondents, mainly active young people who had either learned about the activities themselves or had been chosen by their teachers participated in the project. Consequently, the other greater part of young people was not covered due to insufficient information. It was also noted that about 70% of the project participants were the same activists. So NGOs implementing projects aimed to establish closer relations among the youth are working with the same target group.

Changes in the way of thinking and behavior of the project participants were noted by Amir Temur TYC Chairperson, Manas Ata TYC Chairperson, CYA (Committee of Youth Affairs) Chairperson, a representative of the 10th Division of the Department of Internal Affairs, APK Chairperson. According to them, there are big differences between young people who participated in project activities and those who did not participate. The former are more active and more open to relations with representatives of other ethnicities as opposed to the latter. Ability to freely answer questions, discuss, and express their point of view to a greater degree distinguish those who have participated in project activities, and it has also been confirmed during the focus group discussions.

Focus group participants, 16-17 years old:

- *“Basically, the same students participate in seminars and trainings, teachers always choose only active students”.*

- *“When a competition to participate in the project was announced, I also wanted to participate in it very much, but the teachers did not choose me saying that I was not very active and would dishonor the school”.*

- *“I also really wanted to participate in projects, but I did not know the Russian language, and the teachers did not select me”.* According to the study results it can be concluded that there is limited coverage of youth by the programs to strengthen interethnic relations.

Section 3: There is weak coordination between NGOs implementing youth projects

Findings and Conclusion

The attempt to study effectiveness and influence of peacebuilding projects on the Osh City youth who played an active role during the inter-ethnic clashes in June 2010 has been made in the document. As a result of the study it has been found out that the projects implemented by NGOs in general have been successful and have contributed to strengthening inter-ethnic relations. However, there is limited coverage of participants, since very often the same group of young people was involved in the events, while the other, much larger group was not covered by project activities. It is also important to note weak coordination between various NGOs and international organizations working with youth.

On the basis of analysis of all the respondents' answers, the fact of poor coordination between NGOs working with youth can be noted, which prevents them from acting in concert. As a rule cooperation between NGOs is carried out through hiring trainers and facilitators for specific events such as round tables, seminars, trainings, inviting forum theater members from other NGOs. The study has not revealed any other forms of cooperation. As proved by the study, NGOs often interact with youth committees, state agencies, law enforcement agencies, 10th Division of Osh City Department of Internal Affairs, and local authorities. It is probably due to the fact that NGOs implement projects proposed by international organizations funded by international donors; that is why cooperation and coordination should happen at the level of international actors too. NGOs implementing projects can promote the idea of cooperation with their partners and donors.

Recommendations

Mayor's Office

Develop needs and standards of a social order in the field of inter-ethnic reconciliation and introduce the practice according the State Social Order Law⁶⁶. According to the law a state customer - an authorized state body and local self-governance body - have an opportunity to place or announce an order to solve social problems.

Recommend CYA to regularly analyze the effectiveness of implemented programs and develop recommendations for their improvement. Analysis results are proposed to be discussed at round tables with NGOs and TCs.

Ensure participation of SALSGIER and CYA representatives in planning projects for strengthening inter-ethnic relations among young people together with international organizations and NGOs.

NGOs, IO

⁶⁶ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/202373?cl=ru-ru>

Consider the possibility of involving new young members in events as indicators of youth projects success;

Provide questionnaires and handouts in different languages depending on the ethnic composition of participants during events;

Expand the ways of information disseminating about ongoing projects and activities among all young people including the use of social networks;

Change selection criteria for participation of various groups.

Enhance the use of ToT training approach which involves training of activists for further training of a wider group of young people by them;

Continue dissemination of educational videos in the media to strengthen inter-ethnic relations.

Enhance coordination between NGOs in planning project activities, including through regular meetings.

Annex

Focus Group and Interview participant list

Focus groups

Province / City	Type of respondents	Total number of people
Amir Temur micro district, Osh	School students	20
Manas-Ata micro district, Osh	School students	20

Interviews

Province / City	Type of respondents	Total number of people
Osh	NGOs	4
Osh	Experts	2
Osh	Youth associations / youth centers	2
Osh	Committee on Youth Affairs under the mayor's office	1