I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i. Project data

The project ran from 01 November 2009 to 30 April 2011, with a total grant of USD 300,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 25,000 for monitoring and evaluation). The project was designed by the Kyrgyz NGO Jarandyk Demilge Network (JDN) and implemented at the local level by its regional offices in Atbashy, Naryn, Chaek (Naryn oblast), Karakol (Issyk-Kul oblast), Belovodskoe (Chui oblast), Kyzyladyr (Talass oblast), Nookat (Osh oblast), Kyzyl-Kiya (Batken oblast), Kochkor-Ata and Tash-Kumyr (Jalal-Abad oblast). It aimed to strengthen public participation in local governance and policy-making by facilitating stakeholder dialogue and fostering civic engagement and activism in various towns located in the seven oblasts (provinces) of Kyrgyzstan. As defined in the Project Document, the overall project objective was to foster an engaged and informed citizenry in Kyrgyzstan, by promoting:

greater citizen participation in local decision-making processes,
capacity building of local community advocacy groups, and
provision of access to alternative and independent sources of information on key development and policy issues

ii. Evaluation findings

Project design and objectives were relevant . Key data of the project holder(-)-123(K)15(erin)1 Tc3(f)-14(

cities of oblast/rayon significance. Local government in villages (aiyl-okmotu) is run by 472 LSG heads and 6,818 elected village council members (also referred to as local kenesh deputies)[3]. Before adoption of the new constitution in 2010 mayors were mainly appointed by the President and confirmed by the local councils[4]. Confirmation by the local council in turn required formal agreement by the governor and akims.

A member of the parliament's committee for agrarian policy, water resources and LSG, believes that Kyrgyzstan has made more progress than its neighbors, underlining the z ' ormer member of the National Agency for LSG, highlights that Kyrgyzstan's local governance

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

i. Project strategy and approach

Four key objectives constituted the strategic approach of the project[11]:

Improved citizen participation in local decision-making processes: Under this key

2002 to 2009, JDN, through its regional presence across Kyrgyzstan, has established relationships with local communities and local government officials, with support and guidance provided by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) under the framework of the project 'Information Centres to Support Democracy'. Following this seven-year period, the present project, in terms of scale and coverage, was the first JDN implemented on its own.

The commonality of local development issues JDN identified throughout the country - linked to topics such as land management, water, housing, education, social services, health services, waste management and tax collection/management - and JDN's growing network of civil activists with capacity development needs provided the basis for the project idea. Consequently, JDN's strategic approach was to address local development issues through a nationally coordinated, but locally steered concept of discussion clubs, formalised LAGs and round tables. Training and information dissemination needs were also addressed locally, with the regional project offices obtaining guidance from the national coordination office in the form of training of trainers and the sourcing of news for local information dissemination activities.

JDN managed the project from a small coordination office in Bishkek, with its Executive Director, Mr. Umar Madjun, carrying overall implementation responsibility, supported by Mr. Manas Toktombaev, who at the time was in charge of the project's overall coordination[13]. The actual division of roles among the staff of the project coordination office corresponded to the description in the project document. JDN's Executive Director monitored performance for compliance with the project's objectives with the support of the project coordinator, who was in charge of daily guidance and oversight of activities by the ten field offices. For the purposes of budget control the coordinator collaborated closely with the project accountant.

The project's field offices were ran as foreseen by regional project directors, whose daily operations relied on the support of a local project assistant each. Narrative activity reports and visitor/trainee statistics information were submitted to the Bishkek coordination office on a weekly basis for monitoring and reporting purposes. The coordination office offered guidance and feedback in return and conducted occasional site visits. The Executive Director highlighted that it was considered unnecessary to impose additional or rigorous control measures on the regional project offices, given the collaborative relationship established since 2002. As a matter of JDN's policy, interference with detailed aspects of the work conducted by the field offices was avoided, as these were trusted to know best how to ensure project implementation in line with local needs. Therefore, regional directors had the authority, for example, to autonomously assign priorities among the project's nine training modules provided by the coordination office.

13 Mr. Manas Toktombaev has left JDN after the project's completion for personal reasons. Mr Majdun, who accompanied evaluators during the field visits, was aware of most of the project's technical aspects.

Following their participation in the Training of Trainers, regional project directors for the subsequent conduct of the training of future LAG members had a comprehensive set of materials at their disposal, which according to JDN's Executive Director was previously not available in such depth in Kyrgyzstan. Survey findings were also the subject of discussions with local Kenesh deputies held in the context of the advocacy campaigns' round tables/discussion clubs, mainly with the objective to agree on ways to improve the relationship between local community members and their Kenesh deputies and to raise awareness about citizen's interest and right to participate in the decision-making process.

Each of the ten project offices then also launched an information campaign addressing the wider public. Taking into account the citizens' low levels of awareness about activities and duties of local Kenesh deputies

While it was impossible to exactly establish how many of such campaigns were carried out, the below overview[21] of round tables/discussion clubs held in each of the supported regions leaves little doubt that the planned minimum of twenty campaigns was exceeded.

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Discussion clubs were held both at JDN regional office premises and in on the spot
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an issue, e.g. in the city of Karakol mobile discussion club considerations included: household equipment damaged by electricity supply cuts and variations; a conservation issue prompted by sale of parkland and the subsequent cutting of trees; and a bridge urgently requiring repair.

Meetings with LAGs and JDN's regional offices revealed that a variety of other advocacy campaign tools were exploited to promote the issues pursued by the LAGs:

In Karakol cooperation with the media led to the organisation of four press conferences, with the participation of the deputy head of the city Kenesh. Topics included the results of the baseline survey and a number of local issues including the significant increase of city bus fares. Participation in two radio programmes provided the opportunity to explain to citizens what they can expect from the local Kenesh and how they can follow and monitor

Access to information

According to JDN's records, a total of 77,369 visitors made use of the information sources offered by its ten regional project offices, which included daily news digests

21 Source: JDN

prepared by project staff, ten local and national newspapers, the electronic legal database TOKTOM and the Internet. Among the most frequent service requests were the news digest (39,789), access to the office's library/newspapers (25,628) and other enquiries (7,806).

Project staff also maintained a log book of persons visiting the office to make use of its information services. In the summary of all regional offices below

(30%). With these constituting the principal activities of JDN's field staff (regional directors and assistants), the project's main expenditure (38% of the budget) was used for training and facilitation, including ToT. Breaking this amount (USD 104,395) over the total number of training beneficiaries (185 LAG members, 151 local Kenesh deputies and 1,705 citizens) provides an estimated average cost of USD 51 per trainee.

The methodology and supporting materials for six training modules were developed by, and at the expense of, JDN's founding member NDI; the remaining three were developed at very reasonable costs covered by the project's budget resources (e.g. an am

iv. Impact

Fifteen months after the completion of the baseline survey all regional project offices conducted a second survey. Evaluators detected a number of factors that may have affected the extent to which survey results should be considered sufficiently reliable to determine the project's impact.

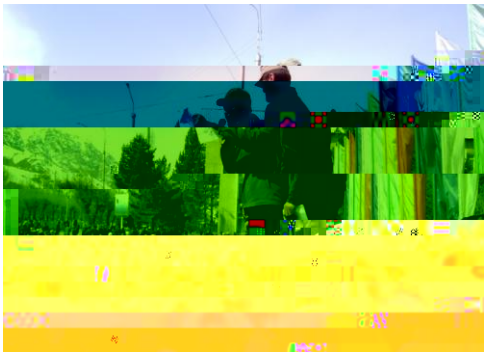
JDN admittedly provided no methodological guidance to surveyors. Only four of the

There is no doubt that the above survey results are representative enough to confirm that awareness levels among the local population have significantly increased in the local areas targeted by the project. However, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the project's capacity building activities have contributed to this improvement, as the survey made no distinction between the general population and the actual beneficiaries of the project's LAG formation and training activities.

Interesting examples of indirect effects of the baseline survey were reported to evaluators in the city of Karakol. According to the regional project director these were prompted by the publication of the survey results in press conferences and a local newspaper (July 2010):

- Public diaries for each local Kenesh deputy were introduced by the city council. All citizens can access these diaries to inform themselves about the most recent and current activities of their local Kenesh deputies.
- A number of formerly low-profile local Kenesh deputies displayed a significant increase in activity to address areas of previous concern, which included the provision of playgrounds for children, the purchase of school equipment and of a yurt for public events, the repair of roads, and the installation of public toilets.

On the basis of success stories relating to LAGs across Kyrgyzstan that have served as a well-functioning platform to address previously identified concrete local issues, evaluators assume the project had positive impacts. As shown in the examples below, the project brought change to local communities, thanks to the introduction of a new mode of cooperation between local Kenesh deputies, other relevant stakeholders and the local population – a finding which is fully consistent with the population's i(on)3su en3su



Public meetings in Naryn between January and April 2010

Waste management issues in Koksai solved

The LAG, supported by the project's regional director, Dilara Moldogazieva (Kyzyl-Adyr), identified waste management as an issue requiring urgent attention, as the site in use was close to the village's water management facility and kindergarten. Following a meeting with local Kenesh deputies the local government cleared the area within two months and leased it to a private person for farmland cultivation. However, garbage started to fill up a river bank adjacent to the newly designated waste disposal area outside the village (see below left image). Following six months of discussion clubs and round table meetings between LAG members, Kenesh deputies and other stakeholders, a definitive location was officially sanctioned through a spatial planning decision of the competent local authority. In addition, the LAG, in cooperation with a local NGO, successfully applied for support from a Dutch organization for cooperation with developing countries (PSO). Funds were used to plant trees along the river bank, once it had been cleared of garbage by LAG members and public service workers. According to Dilara Moldogazieva, the final site allocation as well as the protection and management of the river bank by the agency for environmental protection would have not happened without the continuous efforts of the members of the LAG.

Left: previous waste management issues in Koksai. Right: first revenue-based salaries paid out thanks to a successful local economic initiative of local farmers in Akmus.

VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	ÓWere the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ÓShould another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives	

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

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