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This newsletter is an overview of the most significant milestones achieved by USAID and our partners from April through June 2015. The stories were selected to demonstrate the diversity and the scope of USAID programs in the Kyrgyz Republic and to celebrate the hard work of everyone who made these achievements happen.



EDUCATION

USAID partners with the people and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic for quality education so every child can have a brighter future.

USAID Promotes Culture of Reading through Book Week

Kyrgyzstan celebrated National Book Week from April 20-24 to raise awareness of the importance of reading. Press conferences, poetry evenings, meet-the-author events, community resource library dedications, round tables on fostering a culture of reading, reading competitions, and reading activities for families took place throughout the country with USAID and other donor support.

On **April 23**, USAID Mission Director Greene, along with the Deputy Ministers of Education, Culture, Tourism, and Information, formally celebrated World Book Day by presenting awards to winners of a children's book competition.

Kyrgyzstan faces serious literacy challenges. Studies show that only **12%** of primary grade students are able to read fluently and comprehend grade-level material. Public campaigns are one of the methods employed by USAID to promote the culture of reading.



Primary grade students prepare for the hand-made books competition during the World Book Day. Photo: Hector Gonzalez.

Reading Together Project | Implementing Organization: American Institute for Research (AIR), Save the Children | *To learn more about this project [click here](#).*

Our success stories



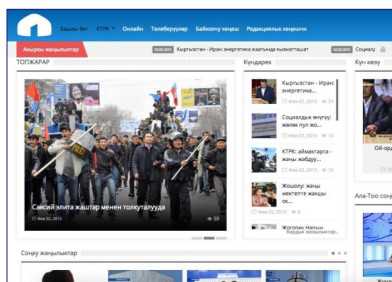
COLD STORAGE BRINGS PROFITS TO FARMERS



KYRGYZ WOMEN EXPAND SMALL BUSINESSES



CAREER GUIDANCE FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS



PUBLIC BROADCASTER REVAMPS WEBSITE



MUNICIPAL SERVICES TAKE A LEAP FORWARD

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

USAID partners to support inclusive and accountable democratic processes and to improve government policies and services to achieve a well-governed and prosperous Kyrgyz Republic.

Registration Service Set for Broader Institutional Changes

The Good Governance and Public Administration Support (GGPAS) program continued its long-term engagement with the State Registration Service, the largest service provision institution in the country, to improve citizen satisfaction and realize the organization's long-term strategic goals. Established in late 2009, the SRS provides a wide array of document services (passports, driver's licenses, vehicle registration, property deeds, land titles, and civil status acts) that are a daily necessity for citizens. The SRS has also been charged with collecting citizen biometric data to establish a Unified Electronic Population Registry and improve the electoral process during the upcoming 2015 parliamentary elections.

This quarter, GGPAS supported the rehabilitation of two key Civil Status Registration (ZAGS) offices that serve nearly 1 million citizens in Bishkek and nearly 350,000 in Kara-suu district of Osh. These rehabilitated facilities will not only increase the functionality of and citizen satisfaction with services provided in these municipalities, but also are a critical pilot for the automated information system that the SRS plans to roll out to 60 ZAGS offices across the country. Simultaneously, GGPAS supported the long-term institutional development of the SRS by assisting with the agency's three-year institutional strategy, performance management system, and unified standard of services. All these long-term initiatives will help the SRS Central Office to more effectively manage the entire registration system, reducing corruption, improving service quality, and increasing citizens' satisfaction.



Bishkek Civil Status Registration Office opened in 1987 to be renovated with USAID's support. Photo: Kloop.kg

Good Governance and Public Administration Strengthening Program (GGPAS) | Implementing Organization: International Resources Group | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Parliament Discusses Implementation of the Law on Countering Human Trafficking

On **June 29**, the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy chaired a parliamentary hearing on implementation of Law on Countering Human Trafficking. Due to the lack of monitoring of the implementation of this law since its adoption in 2005, the Committee on Social Policy established an Interagency Working Group to conduct a monitoring exercise, the results of which were presented by Member of Parliament **Yrgal Kadyralieva**.

Ms. Kadyralieva noted that the Kyrgyz Republic lacks a national mechanism to refer victims of trafficking to support providers and does not allocate state funding to support trafficking victims. The general recommendation was to bring the law in alignment with international standards. Participants of the event including representatives of civil society, the Ministry of Labor, Youth, and Migration, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other government institutions also discussed new trends in human trafficking like the needs of male victims of trafficking and cases of Kyrgyz citizens travelling to Syria and Iraq. This hearing was followed by an annual government-civil society Dialogue on Counter-Trafficking in early July, held for the first time in Osh.



Participants of the parliamentary hearing discuss the trafficking report findings. Photo: IOM

The hearing was organized with support of , with the support of USAID's Counter-Trafficking Project and the USAID/DFID Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Strengthening Program (KPSP).

Counter-trafficking Project | Implementing Organization: International Organization for Migration | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

University-Level Education on Civil Society Extended to Southern Kyrgyzstan

On **April 10**, Osh State University (OSU) opened an on-campus Non-Profit Management (NPM) Resource Center, supported by USAID's Collaborative Governance Program (CGP). The NPM Resource Center is part of CGP's broader effort to strengthen university education on public policy and on the role of civil society in a democracy. Rectors and professors from a range of southern universities including Osh State, Jalalabad State, Jalalabad Commercial Institute, Batken State, and Kyrgyz-Uzbek Universities, students, and civil society representatives attended the ceremony. The NPM Resource Center (an OSU-donated classroom within their Business and Management faculty), similar to the CGP-supported space at Kyrgyz National University, will serve as the southern hub for professors engaged in NPM course development, as well as for students looking for internships with civil society organizations and civil society representatives interested in further professional development.



Ann Hopper (USAID), Vice Rector of Osh State University Abdygany Abduvaliev, and Gulshat Maatkerimova (USAID CGP) opening the NPM Resource Center in Osh State University. Photo: EWMI

In addition to managing the resource centers, CGP in partnership with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Civil Society Studies, is piloting two NPM courses developed collaboratively by professors from ten partner universities in Kyrgyzstan, that has **400** students. Additional courses on non-profit financial management and legal issues will be introduced during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Collaborative Governance Program | Implementing Organization: East-West Management Institute | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Journalists Discuss Effective Elections Coverage

Three USAID partners – the Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Strengthening Program (KPSP), Internews Network, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) – joined forces **June 19-21** to conduct training on coverage of political campaigns and elections. With additional support from the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, over **30** journalists representing television, radio, and print media outlets attended the event. Founder of Slovakian media monitoring project MEMO 98 Rastislav Kuzhel led the two-day seminar together with several local experts on journalism and elections including Central Election Commission Deputy Chair **Gulnara Djurabaeva** and former OTRK and Azattyk director **Sultan Jumagulov**. Participants studied theory and gained practical skills through interactive exercises that emphasized objective and impartial coverage. The training covered multiple media formats including video clips, talk shows, longstory, and Skype interviews.



Training participants during the Q&A session.
Photo: Internews

Upcoming activities will include training for journalists from OTRK and Yntymak TV and Radio on safe election coverage, and how to support televised candidate debates. USAID and Great Britain's Department for International Development jointly fund these activities.

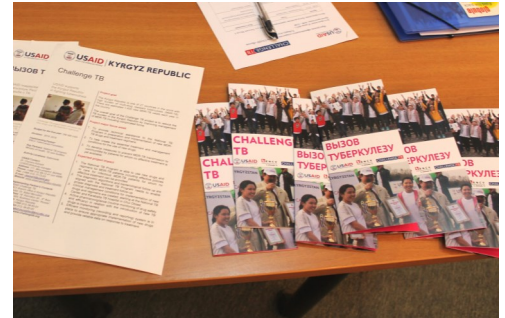
USAID/DFID Kyrgyz Parliamentary Strengthening Program (KPSP) and Access to Information Project | To learn more about these programs [click here](#).

USAID supports the people and government of the Kyrgyz Republic to fight the country's most serious infectious diseases to save lives.

New Project Fights Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis

USAID launched a new Challenge TB Project on June 25. According to the World Health Organization, TB remains a serious public health problem in the Kyrgyz Republic. Latest stats from the Ministry of Health show that TB incidence is increasing: **101.1** cases in 2014 compared to **99.8** cases in 2013. The growing number of drug-resistant TB cases (1,125 cases in 2014 compared to 1,100 cases in 2013) is of a particular concern. Drug-resistant tuberculosis is a form of tuberculosis that is resistant to anti-TB drugs and can occur when these drugs are misused or mismanaged. People can also contract resistant TB from other patients.

In 2013, 2014 and 2015, WHO issued a set of guidelines on the use of Bedaquiline and Delamanid, two new drugs used to treat drug-resistant TB cases. The guidelines define the basic conditions necessary for the use of Bedaquiline by national TB programs, as well as by public and private partners involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities aimed at stopping drug-resistant TB. Challenge TB Project will help the National TB Program and Ministry of Health adopt the new guidelines and introduce new TB drugs and regimens in line with WHO recommendations.



Challenge TB will support the Kyrgyz Republic in curbing the spread of drug-resistant Tuberculosis. Photo: USAID

[Challenge TB Project](#) | Implementing Organization: KNCV |

GeneXpert™ Training and Equipment for Better TB Diagnosis

On April 27-29 the Kyrgyz Republic national laboratory service staff attended a training on GeneXpert™ that was organized by USAID. GeneXpert™ is a highly effective technology for diagnosing tuberculosis. What is even more important, GeneXpert™ can determine if a patient has a drug-resistant form of TB, which does not respond to regular treatment.

In the past, diagnosing drug-resistant TB could only be done in labs and take **up to six weeks**. GeneXpert™ can determine TB almost immediately, which allows patients to start receiving proper medication sooner and prevents the infection from spreading.

USAID already provided with three GeneXpert™ stations and is planning to add two more to improve TB diagnostics in all the regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. In June, USAID donated medicine to the Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Health that will allow over 200 people to complete treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis.

[Defeat TB Project](#) | Implementing Organization: Abt Associates | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

USAID and Ministry of Health Visit Remote Jalal-Abad Nutrition Project Sites

From June 20-22, USAID health officers, accompanied by Deputy Minister of Health **Amangeldy Murzaliev**, visited the remote Toguz Toro district of Jalalabad province to monitor the SPRING nutrition activity. Launched in March 2015, the USAID SPRING project is active in ten districts of Jalalabad addressing the extremely high rates of anemia among women and malnutrition among children of the Jalalabad region. USAID educates caregivers about child feeding, trains health workers on maternal and child nutrition, and supports community outreach on nutrition topics. Toguz Toro is both remote and mountainous and is only accessible during four summer months. In order for the joint USAID-Ministry of Health team to arrive, an avalanche was cleared from the main road. Deputy Minister **Murzaliev** expressed his gratitude that USAID was working in such a challenging location with a demonstrated need for nutrition assistance.



Doctors at Toguz-Toro regional maternity ward. Photo: A. Kuznetsova

[SPRING](#) | Implementing Organization: JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID builds a stronger economy and increases employment in the Kyrgyz Republic by strengthening business and government so families can build better lives.

Kyrgyz Republic Adopts New Civil Aviation Law

The Kyrgyz Republic Parliament passed a new civil aviation law on **June 29** that brings Kyrgyz aviation legislation in line with international standards. The President signed the Law in August. Passage of this legislation is an important milestone in the country's efforts to remove a ban on flights to and from the European Union. The ban was imposed by the EU in **2006** when the Kyrgyz Republic failed a European Commission air-safety audit managed by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The next challenge for the Kyrgyz Republic is to show tangible improvements to its air safety systems during an international air-safety audit planned for **January 2016**. A strong showing on the forthcoming audit would bolster the Kyrgyz Republic's case for EU authorities to lift the flight ban. The drafting and passage of the new law were made possible by major technical assistance from USAID and fruitful cooperation between the Kyrgyz airline industry and the Civil Aviation Agency. USAID will continue to assist the Kyrgyz Republic in its efforts to turn legislative gains into tangible safety improvements and access to EU air-travel markets.



In the future, Manas International Airport in Bishkek may be able to resume flights from the EU if the country passes audit by the International Civil Aviation Organization . Photo: Kloop.kg

Business Growth Initiative and REFORMA | Implementing

Organization: Deloitte Consulting, Inc. | To learn more about these programs [click here](#) and [click here](#).

USAID Supports Ministry of Agriculture's National Field Day

On **May 26**, the USAID Agro Horizon Project assisted the Ministry of Agriculture in hosting an agricultural field day in Osh Oblast. The event showcased twenty smallholder farmers' fields and greenhouses. Each of these farmers successfully adopted technologies that improved the production of early-season vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Employing simple greenhouses, drip irrigation, and better seed varieties allowed these farmers to capture premium prices by bringing vegetables to market four to ten weeks earlier than usual. The event was led by Minister of Agriculture **Taalaibek Aidaraliev** and Osh Oblast Governor **Sooronbai Jeenbekov**. More than **150** farmers, agribusiness employees, and agricultural extension agents from every oblast in Kyrgyzstan participated.



Regional farmers listening to a peer presentation on how to boost agricultural productivity.
Photo: AgroHorizon

Agro Horizon | Implementing Organization: ACDI / VOCA | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Winners of the "Kyrgyz Tourism Destinations" Competition

On **June 10**, USAID's Business Growth Initiative (BGI) announced the winners of the contest "Kyrgyz tourism destinations". BGI received **53** applications and selected four to receive comprehensive technical support package, in areas such as effective marketing, upgrades in sanitation and other light infrastructure, and customer service.

The winning proposals included an emerging winter sports center near the eastern city of Karakol, the 9th century religious monument in Burana Tower, a section of the Silk Road near Osh and the Karakol Riverpark. Over the next year, USAID will support the selected finalists with thorough gap analysis and location-specific business development activities.

BGI is also working in partnership with the Kyrgyz's National Statistics Committee (NSC) to improve the reliability of tourism statistics. BGI recruited a tourism statistics expert from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to assess the NSC. One of the initial findings was that there is not a functioning inter-institutional platform for data collection and sharing - a common challenge for governments worldwide. USAID plans to work with the NSC and the Department of Tourism to improve their ability to collect, analyze and report accurate tourism data utilizing international standards, as well as increase the dissemination of tourism statistics through government websites.



Ailanpa lake is one of the tourism destinations that will be supported by USAID. Photo: BGI

Business Growth Initiative | Implementing Organization: Deloitte Consulting, Inc. | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

USAID and Ministry of Energy and Industry Sign Memorandums of Understanding

On **June 3**, Minister of Energy and Industry **Kubanychbek Turdubaev** and USAID Mission Director **Michael Greene** concluded a pair of MOUs that outline the technical assistance and training to be provided by the USAID Energy Links Project. Key areas of assistance from Energy Links include capacity building of a settlement center, which will independently account for electricity and financial flows between energy-sector companies, and development of a new law on electricity that will bolster the independence of the energy-sector regulator and provide a framework for establishing an electricity market.

Minister **Turdubaev** also provided details of the energy-sector reform plan that the Defense Council (chaired by the President) tasked him to submit by mid-June. At the heart of the plan are several measures to strengthen the Ministry's management control over energy-sector companies in an effort to improve performance and reduce corruption. At Minister **Turdubaev's** request, Energy Links will participate in a working group that will help the Ministry finalize the plan.



Several USAID programs support the Kyrgyz Republic's energy sector both in policy initiatives and infrastructure improvement. Photo: USAID

Energy Links | Implementing Organization: ECODIT | To learn more about this program [click here](#).

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