

**PA ‘INTERNATIONAL CENTER**

**‘INTERBILIM’**

# **ANNUAL REPORT (brief) 2014**



**Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. THE SITUATION IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC IN 2014

#### • REVIEW OF THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION

The KR President approved amendments to the Criminal Code; these amendments were linked with limitation periods concerning cancellation on the corruption crimes regarding the law “On additions to the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic” in April 2014. The law was adopted by the Parliament (Jogorky Kenesh, JK) on March 6, 2014; the goal of the law was the improvement of criminal and legal norms regarding the prevention of and fight against corruption.

The epic trilogies *Manas*, *Semetei*, and *Seitek*, the Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets- ala -kiyiz and shirdak, the holiday Nooruz, and the art of (storytellers of Kyrgyz epics) were included on the UNESCO list for non-material cultural heritage. Kyrgyzstan became the initiator and the coordinator of the joint nomination “Traditional Knowledge and Skills of Production of Kyrgyz and Kazakh Yurts (Turkic Nomadic Dwelling)”. Two joint nominations, including “Aitysh, Aitys - improvisation art,” were prepared alongside Kazakh experts in September 2014.

The Kyrgyz Republic (KR, Kyrgyzstan) was given the status of “Partner in Democracy” by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) as a result of four summer consultations. This status expands Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with PACE, as well as opportunities to promote democratic transformations.

In December 2014 Kyrgyzstan entered into the Customs Union as the president of Kyrgyzstan signed a contract, resulting in the country's subsequent entry into the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). According to the contract, on accession to the EEU, Kyrgyzstan's share in customs receipts is determined to be 1, 9 percent. On May 9, 2015, Kyrgyzstan will become an equal member.

The Kyrgyz -Tajik border: On January 11, 2014, at the site of the joint stock company Sai, there was a shootout between the frontier guards of the two states; as a result, five KR frontier guards were wounded. That year, the government started strengthening its borders, as well as began an effective dialogue with Tajikistan regarding boarding infrastructure improvements.

On February 6, 2014, the JK approved a memorandum between the government of Kyrgyzstan and the Canadian company Centerra Gold Inc. regarding the future of the Kumtor project. They agreed to establish a joint venture on the Kumtor mining works (with an equal division of shares - 50/50).

In Kyrgyzstan, the government started a national campaign to collect biometric data in order to create a state register of the population. 2014 was marked by disorder in the Parliamentary coalition and the resignation of Prime Minister J. Satybaldiyev. The new cabinet structure was approved in April 2014. The issues of tariff increases for thermal energy and hot water were brought up again in the summer of 2014. However, civil sector activists challenged the cabinet's decision, having proved the existence of procedural violations during the adoption of these decisions. As a result, the court threw out the government's resolution on the new tariffs.

In 2014, Kyrgyzstan started implementing a number of large economic projects in several spheres, including energy. These included a high voltage line project, “Datka — Kemin,” the construction of “Kemin” and “Datka” substations, construction of the Alternate North-South Highway; a construction project for an upper cascade hydroelectric power station, the reconstruction of Bishkek's combined heat and power plant, and the reconstruction of the Toktogul hydroelectric power station. Chinese investors acted as the main partners in these projects.

The government started public administration reforms 2 years ago; 18 of the 60 points had been executed by the end of 2014. The started reforms include: the creation of a financial settlements center, the adoption of a new tariff policy, a continued fight against corruption, etc. In November, the JK adopted a

law against the road blocking introducing administrative penalties for violations: to individual persons 5.000 soms, and to legal entities, 70.000 soms, with possible detention up to 5 days.

Concerning mass media: changes were made to Article 329 of the Criminal Procedure Code : large penalties or imprisonment from 1-5 years were introduced for the false denunciation of commission of crime. During the year, various meetings were held by various groups. A total of 92 meetings on social, economic, and household character and 118 meetings on political character were held. As reported by Bishkek, 210 protest actions were held in 2014 in the Kyrgyz capital.

These meetings came with various requirements. The authorities were required to resolve the issue of Kyrgyzstan's entry into the Customs Union through a referendum, to change the electoral system, to bring about a logical conclusion to judicial reform, to create a new government "capable of carrying out reforms," to carry constitutional reform, to meet in support of detainees for overlapping the road in the Bakay-Ata area, to denounce the Kumtor agreement, to refuse to sell shares of the Manas airport, to punish the individuals who sold "Kyrgyzgaz," and others.

The meetings that took place in different regions of the country, and testified to country-wide freedom of speech and the participation of citizens in the discussion of problems and issues of national importance. However, the bulk of the population sees the necessity of discussing problems differently and exclude meetings from their activities, instead voicing their concerns through bringing suggestions to the JK and government.

#### • **KYRGYZ RATINGS IN 2014**

Kyrgyzstan was rated variously across different spheres:

Kyrgyzstan took **74<sup>th</sup> place out of 125 in a list of best countries worldwide**. The rating considered criteria such as level of mass media freedom, quantity of refugees, volume of weapon exports, and number of Nobel laureates.

Kyrgyzstan took **74<sup>th</sup> place in the new rating of wellbeing of countries worldwide** (Prosperity Index) for 2014; the list was compiled by the analytical center Legatum Institute. This indicator on 6 positions became higher than the indicators of 2013.

Kyrgyzstan took **66<sup>th</sup> place in ranking freedom**.

From a report by Freedom House, Kyrgyzstan took 147<sup>th</sup> place out of 197 countries; **Kyrgyzstan is a leader in its region due to freedom of speech**.

According to data from the USA Heritage Foundation, Kyrgyzstan took **82<sup>nd</sup> place in the rating of economic freedom, making it a moderately economically free country**. Kyrgyzstan took **109<sup>th</sup> place in an economic rating of market competitiveness**, having only overtaken Ukraine (129<sup>th</sup>) from the CIS according to the annual Global Competitiveness Index report for 2014.

KR takes **second place worldwide regarding the unemployment rate**: Kyrgyzstan (8, 3%) comes second only to Italy (12, 5%) according to National Statistic committee data.

By classification from the World Bank and other international organizations, **Kyrgyzstan left the 'poor countries' category in 2014**; it is now ranked among developing countries with an average level of income.

In the lists of international ratings, there is one that concerns the global hunger index. **Kyrgyzstan was excluded from the list, and is now considered a country in which there is no hunger problem according to NISI**. In 2009, Kyrgyzstan was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> on that list. Out of 50 ratings, Kyrgyzstan is in the top half of those lists in 20 of them. In the remaining 30 cases, it falls in the lower half.

Kyrgyzstan took the **83<sup>rd</sup> place in the world charity rating for 2014**. The rating was made by the international charitable organization Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), and includes data on 135 countries worldwide.

Kyrgyzstan won the 1<sup>st</sup> place in a competition among countries improving their tourism. Voting took place in Russia with the National Geographic Traveler magazine project. Kyrgyzstan was the **winner in the category “Improving Relaxation.”** Kyrgyzstan outstripped Israel, South Korea, Iceland, Italy, and Polynesia. Russians gave about 80 percent of their votes for Kyrgyzstan.

On the Forbes list, the **KR took 164<sup>th</sup> place out of 178 countries on the index of perception of corruption through the Transparency International rating**, with an unemployment indicator equal to 11% in 2014. The results of 2014 show that Kyrgyzstan took 136<sup>th</sup> place out of 150 in the rating of the international organization Transparency International. The major factor that allowed the country to get this result in the fight against corruption is the high political will of the president of KR, relevant decisions by the council of defense, and the president's decree.

## **1.2. THE ROLE OF KYRGYZ REPUBLIC NGOS IN NATIONAL POLITICAL PROCESSES DURING 2014**

NGOs in the Kyrgyz Republic continued their activity according to their missions and program tasks. The NGO sector continued to carry out public monitoring of the initiatives and activity of various authorities.

One NGO group expressed its opinion on the issues of Kyrgyzstan's entrance into the Customs Union.

According to its opinion, the decision-making process in the Customs Union doesn't guarantee an equal, fair approach for all its members, and it threatens Kyrgyzstan's national interests. The group issued an Appeal in which it was noted that the “entry of Kyrgyzstan into the Customs Union threatens its eternal values – national sovereignty and independence.” The Customs Union is a political union of authoritarian regimes, where the decisions are made by a narrow circle of people without the opinion of the JK or the public. Kyrgyzstan's entry into the Customs Union (CU) will deprive us of our independence, and considerably narrow the possibilities of our Parliamentary democracy established by the April Revolution and the Constitution of 2010.”

In December 2014, the given group published its appeal after the civil forum "Kyrgyzstan and the Customs Union: Results of 2014 and Prospection.” According to the group, Kyrgyzstan's entry into the Customs Union and Economic Union (EEU) is not legitimate, but instead is a hasty and incorrect decision which will lead to the loss of state sovereignty, political, informational, and economic security, democratic achievements, and violation of human rights and freedoms. The group disseminated its appeal with an explanation of their reasoning why Kyrgyzstan should not enter into the Customs Union, and disseminated the SWOT analysis prepared by an expert. In their appeal, the compatriots called to keep constitutional rights and demand from the President, the government, and the JK to stop Kyrgyzstan's illegitimate entry process into the Customs Union.

The given initiative of the NGO group reflected the existence of freedom of speech, pluralism of opinions in the country, and a diversity of estimates concerning public importance. It also drew the attention of the government to the necessity of examining documents, procedures, and the conduct boarder informational campaign more deeply on behalf of the population to look into the expected pluses and minuses of the country's entry into the Customs Union, among other issues.

The NGO sector held several meetings and took part in public Parliamentary hearings due to initiatives from several deputies regarding the equation of NGOs with “foreign agents” and demanding requirements from NGOs for additional reporting of their finance and activity. The information campaign was held with participation of the CIB.

During draft consideration for a social protection development program for 2015-2017, as well as during draft consideration for the republican budget of the KR for 2015 and the forecast for 2016-2017, some organizations working on a solution for children's problems an appeal to the JK and the Kyrgyz government demanding an increase of the guaranteed minimum income to 815 soms, and fixed sizes of benefits to children from needy families to 650 soms a month starting in January 1, 2015, requiring a planned 2.882.900.000 soms in the republican budget instead of increasing the finances of the corruption boarding school system.

In December 2014, a number of NGOs who working with children with limited abilities began collecting signatures in support on the ratification of the Convention of the UN on the rights of disabled Kyrgyz citizens. Members of the group Zhanyryk, a network of 28 non-governmental organizations and parental associations combining their efforts for the living improvements for children with limited health opportunities, effecting 1.748 children appealed to the JK deputies to ratify the International Convention on the rights of disabled people. That convention was adopted on December 13, 2006 at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations of the General Assembly and ratified by 151 countries.

A number of NGOs made an appeal with intention to revise and achieve the cancellation of the decision of the Pervomay court and to support attempts to bring incompetent judges and officials to face responsibility concerning Bishkek city council's resolutions for obviously illegal decisions- to limit places for carrying out meetings within Gorky Square. In the statement, it was noted that the judge's justification is not a basis for the introduction of restriction of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic; the judge's justification was linked with citizen appeals and the necessity to prepare for the 4th anniversary of the national revolution in April 2010, and also the prevention of destabilization of the current public-political situation by the destructive forces, provision of citizens' safety, and public law and order,

On October 15, 2015, civil activist Toktakunov N. submitted a petition to the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of the KR for recognition of the order of listening to telephone negotiations (accepted in our country) and other invasions into secrets of negotiation correspondence and messages by operational search services as unconstitutional.

## II. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PA “INTERNATIONAL CENTER INTERBILIM”

### 2.1. PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PROTECTION OF ITS SUBJECTS (ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING)

The Public Association “International Center Interbilim” (further CIB), registered in 1994, has extended its activity, implemented various initiatives, projects, programs, advocacy, and lobbying.

<b>CIB GOALS:</b>	<b>CIB TASKS:</b>
<p>Creation of democratic conditions towards the establishment, development, and strength of civic society in Kyrgyzstan through bolstering non-governmental organizations that work with vulnerable sectors of the population, as well as community based organizations and Initiative Groups. CIB works for the formation of environmentally favorable conditions for the development of civil society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building civil society organization capacity</li> <li>▪ Developing leadership, ensuring human rights protection and freedom, and conducting campaigns to protect rights and promote public interests</li> <li>▪ Promoting the establishment and effective function of democratic institutes, ensuring democratic governance and transparency of the state system through public civic expertise mechanism, and monitoring state body activity</li> <li>▪ Promoting state unification efforts, including public, religious, and other similar organizations during the implementation of its charter and program tasks</li> <li>▪ Facilitating favorable conditions for the growth of specialists' professional mastery of the non-commercial sector and the development of all types of intellectual creativity</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITY OF THE CIB AS A DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC INTERESTS

### Статья I. Advocacy for businessmen after initiating cost increases of voluntary patents

CIB initiated a petition for appeal to the KR prime minister and the KR Minister of Finance to protect entrepreneurs after a suggestion was made to the government to increase the cost of the voluntary patents for businessmen working in various spheres.

The appeal, signed by 32 organizations, noted that suggestions on such sensitive topics related to the cost of patents should be made on the basis of an analysis that takes all factors into account. These factors include the recent (2010) increase in patent costs (an almost 400% increase for separate services), the economic condition of citizens, businessmen of small businesses, working conditions, the real living wage, and consumer ability.

In the appeal, it was noted that according to official figures, the poverty level in Kyrgyzstan is 33, 7%; this means that 1/3 of the population lives below the poverty line according to official figures. However, the living wage in Kyrgyzstan is very low for normal existence. According to the opinion of many, the living wage isn't based on actual necessary demands in connection with the real scales of poverty that cannot be defined qualitatively, as the intermediate minimum and indicators of the working population's average salary is taken into account while calculating the living wage.

The appeal stated that minimal rates of voluntary patents could stimulate small business development and support individuals that started businesses to help their families. It is more expedient to increase the budget by increasing the quantity of purchased patents, not through a cost increase. It is necessary to make a contribution to keep the principles of honesty and responsibility alive, and to promote removal of unfair service providers from the "shadow" economy, decrease corruption, etc. The differentiated approach concerning services and necessity of examining situation in each case are necessary. The increase in the cost of patents for businessmen of small business will lead to a decrease in purchases of voluntary patents, an increase in the shadow economy, and an increase in impoverishment of Kyrgyz citizens. In the appeal, it requested the exclusion of the draft of the resolution "About modification and additions in the resolution of the government of the KR," dated December 30, 2008, and No. 733 "On the statement of the basic sum of a tax on the basis of the voluntary patent by types of business activity" from consideration.

*Results:*

*Ultimately, the suggested initiative regarding the increase of patent costs was not supported by the government.*

- **Advocacy in protection of doctors who experienced mob attacks perpetrated by a deputy of the KR JK**

In February, 2014 the CIB addressed the Chairman of the KR JK Committee on Regulations and deputy ethics, Altybaeva A., and the deputies of the JK with an appeal. Maintaining ethics as a deputy is a legal duty. It was noted in the appeal that Kyrgyz public organizations were disgusted with the occurrence of mob attacks by a member of Respublica political party of a doctor- the manager of neurology No. 3 at the national hospital. The attack included aggressive behavior, insults, and attempts of physical violence. There were requirements that the JK would make an official statement for voters in relation to the behavior of this deputy to discuss the dangerous, rule breaking behavior of the deputy at a meeting of the given JK Committee and to take measures.

*Result:*

*The reply was received from the JK, noting that the JK will make a decision after the court examination and its decision. The result of the court debates resulted in the reconciliation of the parties.*

- **Protection of the LGBT community and the Group "Against the Customs Union" from publications and claims of offensive character in mass media**

The CIB spoke out in defense of the LGBT community during the round table "Modern journalism and ethics in mass media" held by the Center of Information Rights with the Center of Mass Media Support on June 13, 2014. Mass media representatives, an adviser to the KR president, and representatives of NGO participated in the round table. During the discussion, the CIB raised the issue of using offensive slur by a correspondent of Delo No. (June 4, 2014) in relation to the LGBT community, and his request "not to interfere in politics."

The CIB noted that mass media must bear responsibility for similar publications because of the humiliation of honor and dignity, discrimination against communities that simply wish to participate in public life as a continuation of their natural rights, guaranteed to everyone from birth: the right to receive and distribute information, to participate in elections and public administration, to appeal to courts, etc.

The CIB noted the caused loss to society and national ethics of the country because of the psychological pressure by some in the mass media, including the Delo No. newspaper, as they have attempted to create an atmosphere of hatred and intolerance in relation to individuals or groups about whom the journalists write. Also, an article found Delo No. devoted to information on the group “Against the Customs Union” was discussed. This group has another opinion, different from most concerning the Customs Union. The correspondent provided incorrect information in the article. These tendencies in mass media lead to the suppression of the pluralism of opinions nationwide and to the restriction of free speech.

*Result:*

*The press release about participation and round table issues was circulated through a list-serve and other methods. Later, after the appeal of human rights defenders, the Ethics Commission recognized the existence of ethics violations in articles of the newspaper “Delo No”: “Is the opposition preparing a violent power seizure in Kyrgyzstan?” Articles 17 and 18 of the ethics code of journalism were violated, as the there were no links to specific experts, and the point of view of opponents was not reflected.*

- **Advocacy in the protection of the NGO sector against unreasonable publications in mass media and rebroadcasting in OTRK, as well as against modifications to the Law on NGOs as “foreign agents”**

CIB disseminated an appeal concerning the publication of materials regarding NGOs in the private newspaper “Delo No.” stating information on the false figures regarding received donor assistance by some NGOs, with suspicions on communication with the latest events of other countries, such as Ukraine. These publications were directed to denigrate the activities of the Kyrgyzstani NGO sector and create an unstable situation in the country. CIB sent the appeal to the TV channel “OTRK” with a request to examine the issue of the news broadcasting unverified information regarding NGOs in order to comply with ethical standards of journalism. The appeal was sent to the Ethics Commission for their consideration of complaints regarding the mass media.

CIB carried out the petition under an appeal to the government, and more than 25 signatures were collected with a request to express publicly the position of the government concerning NGO sector to initiate a discussion with NGOs and the development of state policy concerning the NGO sector meeting the requirements of the Kyrgyz constitution and universally recognized international standards and standards aimed at bolstering favorable conditions for societal development and the provision of guarantees for observing citizens’ basic rights.

*Result:*

*In an official letter from Prime Minister Sarpashev, it was noted that the role and the importance of the NGO sector has never been doubted: “The point of view of the journalist of the specified newspaper does not coincide with the opinion of the country’s leadership.”*

*The commission on complaints to mass media examined the CIB’s letter for compliance with the article of the “Delo No.” newspaper against the professional and ethical principles of the modern journalism, as well as Kyrgyzstan’s Ethics Code of Journalism.*

*The commission made the following decision:*

*An admission was made that article 17 of the Ethics Code of Kyrgyzstan was violated in the published articles of “Delo No.”: “Rescuers of the nation step on the stage,” “A shower of wealth has poured down on Kyrgyz NGOs from the beginning of Euromaidan,” dated February 22, 2014: “**The points of view of the opponents, including those who became the object of criticism of the journalist, must be presented in a balanced manner.**” There were no oppositional points of view that were criticized; other independent persons who could present their expert opinion on the matter weren’t presented.*

*An admission was made that item #10 of the Kyrgyz Ethics Code of Journalism was violated, as “**The facts, judgments, and assumptions have to be accurately separated from each other.**” In these articles, there are assumptions and conclusions that aren’t backed up by the facts.*

*This decision should be considered a **Warning from the Commission** due to Item 2, Section V of the Provision of the Commission regarding complaints to mass media.*

CIB participated in a working group that promotes public knowledge of NGO sector activity during the smear campaign against the NGO sector perpetrated by some individuals and groups. Kyrgyzstan's NGO sector faced unreasonable and aggressive criticism and persecution in connection with various national and international events, such as the events in Ukraine. Some deputies initiated additions and changes into the law on NGOs as “foreign agents” due to those NGOs receiving grants from international organizations. The wide-spread information war waged against the NGO sector was initiated with the goal of creating a negative public opinion of NGOs.

The analysis of the deputies' bill made by ICNL confirmed that many provisions of the bill contradict the basic democratic principles and provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and contain discriminatory norms. The bill suggests granting broad rights to governmental bodies to interfere with internal affairs of NGOs and international NGOs, and also to be able to halt their activity or liquidate them, at the government's discretion.

CIB organized a meeting of NGOs to develop a broad PR strategy regarding the unfavorable conditions of the smear campaign against the NGO sector. The plan of the joint PR activity of the KR NGO sector was disseminated across social networks, including Facebook and others. NGO representatives were invited to conduct joint PR. CIB and executive director of “Freedom House” initiated a meeting with the Ombudsman concerning the situation with NGO sector and the risks and consequences that would arise from the adoption the “foreign agents” legislation. From September–October 2014, the NGO sector continued an advocacy campaign against the legislation project on NGO, as foreign agents. The CIB took coordinating role in the informational campaign. CIB took the initiative to facilitate the petition under the appeal “Kyrgyz civil society against the adoption of the foreign agents bill.” CIB collected signatures from 231 NGOs in support of the appeal. The appeal was delivered by the partners to the JK, the President of KR, the Prime minister of the KR, and the Ombudsman of the KR; it was also disseminated among the public. CIB promoted the publication of articles by NGO representatives on the activity of their organizations and their attitude towards the “foreign agents” bill. In a month, 12 articles were published on the PF “Freedom Voice” website, on Facebook, sent through list-serve, and disseminated among informational agencies.

CIB and Alliance “Free Generation” presented to a short Forecast of Consequences (social forecasting) to the public as a result of the negative impact and disruptiveness in case of adoption of the NGO bill designating them as “foreign agents.” The adoption of changes and additions will lead to reduction of services offered by the NGO sector and spark serious consequences that will lead to the irreparable harm of the development of the state in its various spheres. The forecast of consequences is divided into spheres: social, economic, and political

To inform the public on the societally useful activities of the NGO sector and the relation to the offered changes the CIB published and spread the following materials:

- Regarding the article “Politics is the sphere directly touching the interests of each human being,” it discusses the writing's narrow interpretation of political activity by the initiators of the offered changes in the bill. The policy is perceived by many only as a field of activity regarding power implementation and distribution, but the policy is a multidimensional concept- it does not imply include this field of activity. It also includes the participation of citizens and associations in affairs of the state, in monitoring of its forms and activity, in rendering assistance in implementation and improvement of state governance. NGOs are public organizations, whose public work is the component of political activities of the state for observance of human rights and to development of the country.
- The article “To ensure transparency, there is no need to identify the NGO sector as 'a foreign agent!’” The article discusses the deadlock - that is, the difficult situation in the Russian Federation after adoption of “foreign agent” status while separating NGO activity between political and non-political. Political activity is connected with policy; policy is a tool kit and series of methods used to achieve set results and are present in all spheres. The publicly political activities of an NGO are directed to assist in the maintenance of state policy regarding human

rights observance and the development of all spheres, both civil and governmental. The article was published on the "Freedom Voice" website, on Facebook CIB pages, and others.

CIB also participated in a meeting between NGOs and the Reporter on Partnership in Democracy, PACE, Mrs. T. Hidasheli, on the "foreign agents" issue, to gather information about the NGO sector's human rights-defending role during previous authoritarian regimes.

CIB signed the Appeal of Russian NGOs and NGOs of the post-Soviet States to Putin V.: "We demand to stop repressions against NGOs!": An open letter to the president of Russia. The letter was signed by 148 NGOs from several countries, including Russia, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, France, and others with the aim to put an end to repressions against civil society organizations in the Russian Federation, and to stop the restriction of the right of freedom of associations.

*Result:*

*At the end of the year, Parliamentary public hearings were held; as a result, the bill was recalled for reconsideration.*

- **Rendering charitable help by the CIB**

- **To the Aksu orphanage in Teploklyuchenko Village, Issyk-kul oblast**

CIB carried out a charity fundraiser to assist the Aksu Orphanage in the Issyk-kul oblast. CIB ordered and delivered mini-football and volleyball equipment, balls, badminton rackets, gloves, and shoes for taekwondo to the orphanage. Because of this fundraiser, CIB gave assistance to the children of the orphanage. The children are now able to play sports and practice a healthy lifestyle thanks to CIB.



- **To two Public Funds: working with orphans and disabled children**

Some funds were delivered to organizations working with orphans and disabled children in the form of food for the "Feed a Child" program in October, 2014, and for the program "Run against Indifference" in October, 2014.

- **To girls and young women from families in need, who received culinary specialist training**

CIB became a partner with an international organization, and through this partnership gave assistance to several girls from families in need to receive professional training. They took the following cooking courses for free: a 2-month course, involving 1 month on theory and 1 month of application. Upon completion of the 2-month training, participants received state-issued certificates and had a chance at employment.

- **CIB participation in the events of other organizations**

- CIB participated in a Round Table organized by the KR Scientific Research Institute "Assessment of the influence of non-governmental organization on the decision-making process" in April 2014. CIB suggested including information on human rights defending organizations during previous authoritarian regimes to the report. The role of NGOs is huge, as they have participated in several meetings of the Public Parliament in Kurultai, provided informational and technical support during their conduction, and promoted dialogue between the politicians, political parties, and NGOs.

CIB spoke on the current situation with the NGO sector: there has been a reduction of the number of working NGOs due to the lack of a state program for NGO support, including informational support, social or state orders, stimulating grants, and tax breaks. Additionally, there is a lack of informational and state support during a period of informational discrediting of the NGO sector by certain politicians and individuals.

- CIB participated in the Round Table “Innovations in electoral procedures: calls and risks” and recommended the inclusion of norms – presenting information on sources of income during the electoral fund filling by political parties with the goals of security, to include admissible types of donations, and developing legislative control mechanisms for electoral funds.
- CIB participated in public hearings on the republican budget for 2015 and forecasting for 2016-2017, and raised the issue of the necessity of government body staff reduction on the basis of functional duty analysis, to consider opportunities to use the released means for increasing benefits for needy children, etc.
- CIB participated in a meeting of the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces on September 30, 2014. The Almanac No. 2 “Experience of the KR in management of crisis situations: lessons for the future” was presented. For research completeness and a picture of the historical events in the country, CIB noted the necessity of demonstrating the NGO sector's contributions and roles during authoritarian regimes and emergency situations experienced by Kyrgyzstan: actions, participation in mobilization, political force consolidation, assistance during Public Parliament and National Kurultai meetings, assistance during the June events in the south, the mobilization and collection of humanitarian aid by the residents Bishkek for the south, etc.
- CIB joined the letter of Coordination Council of Legal entities – “The advisory board of International Consent in KR regarding the development of Russian language.” It aimed to speak with the deputy of the JK to promote the agenda of Russian language development. The following suggestions were made due to the lack of programs for the development of Russian language, the introduction of subjects in Kyrgyz language at schools in the south instructed in Russian, and difficulties that face migrants from the KR. In the letter, suggestions provided include: considering the possibilities of allocation of additional financing for the development and implementation of Russian language programs, including additional hours, introduction of professional development courses for Russian language teachers, as well as for teachers of other subjects, the creation of centers for studying Russian, and legislation for Russian at different steps in the southern regions of the country for labor immigrants.

- **Activities for activist capacity-building and civil society organizations for NGO-connected themes**

CIB organized a meeting of 7 NGO representatives with “Hakaton” programmer specialists on the development of software (problem solutions, idea development for realization, among other goals). PR ideas for information technologies, the website, and other information components were discussed during the meeting.

In 2014, CIB obtained a license for conducting paid trainings in the frame of CIB's income-generating activity and civil society organizations' and activists' capacity strengthening. In April 2014, project design training was conducted for 11 participants of one NGO working with rural women.

- **Recommendations for civil society activities regarding Public Council structure in the Ministries of KR**

CIB presented the recommendations of 4 civil society activists for entering the Public Councils structure in the KR Ministries; 3 of 4 proposed candidates became members of the Public Council of different government institutions. These included the chairman of Public Association of Soldiers' Mothers of the KR, Baygubatova U., who was chosen as the vice-chairman of the Public Council at the KR Ministry of Defense, Aitbaeva Ch., the president of OO “Youth Movement “Nash vek (Our century)” and Union of the Youth and Children's Organizations, and Eralieva M. (A forum of NGO on ABR) became members of the Public Council within the KR Ministry of Finance.

### **CIB ACTIVITY REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS, THE DECREASE OF GENERATED CONFLICTS, AND ASSISTANCE IN STATE GOVERNING AND LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

- **CIB contributed to public administration improvement in the tourism development sphere**

CIB initiated the collection of suggestions from NGOs for state programs in the Kyrgyzstani tourism development sphere. In February 2014, a meeting of NGO representatives was held to discuss the issue of tourism development's stimulation of the country's economic and quality of life development through the creation of an effective KR tourist industry system.

On January 20, the Announcement regarding the collection of suggestions from civil society was distributed through list-serve, local NGO representatives were invited to participate in a meeting of the Council for Tourism Development. The participants discussed development issues and the necessity of accepting various measures from relevant structures for the effective development of the tourist industry, as well as the need of acceptance of various measures from relevant structures for effective development of the sphere. The measures concern the creation of a uniform Tourist Center in KR, strengthening management through preparation and retraining of industry staff, introductions for uniform tourist navigation standards, profile creation for each settlement, transport infrastructure development and modernization, water and sewer infrastructure development, state and private infrastructure modernization, introduction of general know-how, esthetics for tourist industry infrastructure, etc.

*Result:*

*Recommendations were sent to the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Tourism. CIB entered the Estimation Commission, consisted of representatives from all sectors regarding the preparation for and execution of a branch award in tourism development field in KR, the “Kyrgyz Tourism Awards.” The CIB participated in the election of nominators: the best project by tourism type, the best event tourism project, the best tourism operator, the best tourism complex, etc. The announcement of the nomination results was planned for January 23, 2015.*

▪ **Participation with the Civil Union “For Reforms and Result” in promoting systematic reforms of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

CIB continued working with the Civic Union “For Reforms and Result” (CU) to promote systematic Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) reforms to develop a guideline for monitoring the following four activities: gathering information on interactive mechanisms present in civil society institutes, gathering information and understanding the evaluation criteria for militia work, gathering information on selection mechanisms, staff members, and practical applications, and Council work for reforming and developing a system of law and order within the KR Government.

CIB participated in two meetings concerning strengthening interactions with civil society in order to reform the MIA in the UN office on Drugs and Crime.

Information on the CU’s work comes from several organizations, including CIB, to promote reform in the MIA was published on Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: “The path of transformation for the Kyrgyz military is being watched by a group of civic activists from every region of the republic [14]. The preliminary monitoring results were published by the Civic Union “For Reforms and Result” in March, 2014; the document contains recommendations for the authorities to strengthen some components of the reform [15].” (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/>)

On September 20, the CU was invited to a meeting with the prime minister, the acting MIA, and the deputy prime minister. At the meeting, the necessity of speeding up law enforcement agency reforms, issues of the introduction of an MIA staff competition, an external assessment of the MIA activity, information transparency related to the structure, finances, and scope of the MIA, and a social partnership strategy between the military and the population were discussed. At the meeting, Prime Minister Otorbaev D. noted that the “participation of civil society in reforming

of law-enforcement bodies is the key factor to success”. The CU continues working to promote changes in MIA activity through discussion and suggestion.



▪ **Advocacy in “International Center Interbilim” Osh (CIB Osh Branch)’s activities**

CIB Osh Branch defined its priorities in advocacy activity for 2014-2017. These include increasing the capacity of local NGOs and Initiative Groups regarding advocacy and lobbying, supporting initiative groups regarding protection of interests and rights, introduction of a conscientious management policy and anti-corruption mechanisms in local self-governments, an increase in population participation in the decision-making process, and assistance in local service improvement through monitoring and evaluation.

- **Participation in budgeting**

The CIB Osh Branch has actively reacted to violations of the local self-government's legislation by the city administration and the local Osh council. The organization has consistently developed public participation in decision-making processes in the budgetary sphere for Osh city since 2007. Budgetary hearings are being held in Osh at the initiative of the CIB Osh Branch, a practice which has now become a tradition for the local self-government. From May through December 2014, the CIB Osh Branch implemented the "Increase the Level of Transparency and Accountability of the Osh City Budgetary Process" project, working with the PA "Institute of Policy and Development." Thanks to that project, the capacity and opportunities public participation in the local budget discussion were increased. Active citizen representatives were united in the Budgetary Initiative Group, participated in the budgetary hearings of 2015, achieved an extension for an article regarding public land upkeep, on construction of playgrounds at the houses' sites. The local Council and the city administration developed the plan for ensuring transparency of Osh's local budget, for which 25,000 soms were allocated from the local budget. The 2015 civil budget was to be published, and the 2014 civil budget was published at the expense of the local budget.

- **Urgent response**

An appeal to the General Board of TV- OTRK was sent due to a violation of ethics and the rights of TV watchers. OTRK replied concerning the TV program in question, which was devoted to the discussion of a bill on foreign agents, and the program was broadcast repeatedly with the participation of NGOs. The manager of the CIB Osh Branch took part in a conference in Albania on "The prevention of corruption in the state system" in August; she made a presentation on the participation of the local population in the process of improving Osh city's transparency.

On December 17, 2014, the CIB Osh Branch actively took part in Kurultai to discuss the Osh City Charter. There were 28 recommendations suggested. At an active lobby for the CIB Osh Branch, the Osh City Charter was not accepted, and was returned for revision.

In general, 2014 saw 27 appeals were sent to the city administration related to violations of the law by the local self-government, 44 reportages of different character were given in mass media, and 7 televised debates that the Branch participated in to protect interests of the vulnerable groups of population.

In September, applications for a contest to become a member of a public council for the ministries of KR were collected, and CIB Osh Branch Manager Mamasalieva G. was selected as a member of Public Council for the State Agency of the local government.

On September 24-26, 2014 Mamasalieva G. took part in the conference "An assessment of development, from introduction to completion." She made a report on "The assessment of local services as a preventative mechanism for conflicts" based on the CIB's experience evaluating local services. The presentation was well received. In November, the Branch manager took part in Parliamentary hearings to discuss the "Laws on NGOs" legislative project as the regional representative.

- **- Protection of rights to adequate shelter**

The CIB Osh Branch actively protects the rights of citizens during the process of residence demolition and eviction. Inhabitants of 33 houses slated for demolition obtained access to free legal consultation to submit appeals to higher authorities. Previously, CIB Osh Branch promoted the involvement of independent appraisers with the goal to assess the true household damage incurred by demolition. All victims were given assessment results for obtaining negotiation skills with the local government during the conclusion of their contracts. The organization has been engaged in this activity since 2012, and continues to be engaged in the practice, despite little financial support from the outside. The CIB Osh Branch has been and will be defending interests of the population concerning other sites falling under demolition and eviction in 2015-17.

On December 4, organization manager Mamasalieva G. took part in a preliminary session meeting of a UN committee on the social, economic, and cultural rights of citizens. Citizens' rights to adequate housing was asserted. On May 15, 2015 Kyrgyzstan was to report to the UN on implementation of the

convention of the Council for Protection of Human Life the CIB Osh Branch manager arriving from Geneva sent the Alternative report to the UN committee on sufficient housing.

**- Development of a network of NGO. An initiative within a network of NGO “The Regional Humanitarian Form (RHF)”**

The CIB Osh Branch is the member of the RHF coordinating committee, and founded the network. For now it is the expert-consultant in development for the RHF network. The RHF network participated in developing Osh’s social and economic development program in April. The members of RHF expressed their opinions concerning this program, but at the same time noted discontent concerning the existing program wasn't equitable to citizens' interests. RHF undertook monitoring the Osh city administration's social and economic program implementation. The RHF network held Osh budgetary hearings in January, 2014, with the participation of 537 citizens. This resulted in the local council receiving 46 appeals and executing 18 addresses.

At an active lobby, the CIB branch pushed for funds from the local budget aimed at covering the local Council deputies inquiry “execution of a deputy order” be reduced and completely transferred to the Department of Capital Construction to be used for kindergartens. Additionally, the article “10 million soms for financing local initiatives- ‘Fund local initiatives’” was kept.

In May, the branch manager took part in a conference in Almaty on the development of a network of organizations. She gave a presentation on the activity of the Regional Humanitarian Forum Network. The Forum “Assistance in finding results on effective planning and preparation for the autumn-winter period by Osh city municipal services: becoming more effective and targeting the use of the financial aid arriving in Osh city” was held jointly with RHF. On July 24, 2014, the city administration realized 7 recommendations as the results of Forum 11 recommendations were given to the Osh city administration. The transparency in electric stove distribution and humanitarian aid given to strengthen the power supply system was provided by the city administration; the population gained access to information on coal and the liquefied gas purchases at a reduced price.

During facilitation of the joint working group between the RHF and representatives of the Osh city administration, a provision for civil participation in the process of making decision was developed as a mechanism supporting civil participation at a constant level. In total, 4 working group meetings were held. The activity on establishment of the Center of collaboration between population and Osh city administration will continue after the adoption of the charter of Osh city.

**INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

CIB and the Rotary Club offered a unique literary project through illustration- youth-oriented comics helped develop creativity and increase literacy. The key to the program’s success lies in the intellectual property at the end of story. This project has also been implemented in other countries: Cheshire, England, the USA, and Mexico. These stories have been published online: [www.srbrown.info/stories/adult/](http://www.srbrown.info/stories/adult/) for the general public.



The literary project was advertised through various social networks and on Facebook.

CIB organized the comics and graphic novel workshop during the social-cultural action event “Biblioch-2014” (Library Night-2014), put on by the National Library. Developing stories through illustration improves lexicon, literacy, and speech standards, develops the imagination, logical and abstract thinking, and offers other benefits. During the workshop, CIB volunteers shared salient points about the work with participants: they helped participants think of titles, themes, and the goal of the story, helped add character traits to created well-rounded characters, consider whether proposed character actions fit with the story, added moments of intrigue or surprising turn of events, small details, and story-like language, etc. About 30 young people- students and young adults- eagerly came to the workshop, and

there developed various short stories, in both Russian and Kyrgyz languages, about the chosen 12 illustrations.

## 2.2. CIB PROJECT: “CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN THE KR: LIVING SIDE BY SIDE”

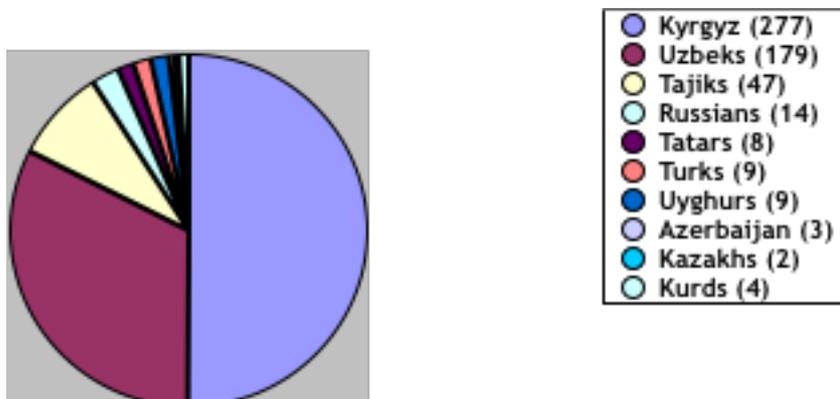
*“I realized a lot of things from this program. Before, I got revenge on my enemies. Now, I think carefully before taking a step. I try to understand others better, instead of retaliating. I started understanding people and their situations, and that they can be different from my situation. Before I considered people who have other point of view my enemies.” - Rakhmanova Rukhsora, 16 years old, 10th grade*

Primary reporting period activities: student manual preparation, strengthening the capacity of 20 trainers in the “Side by Side” program and getting their certifications, 3 rounds of training for 553 students, external evaluation and influence development efforts.

The license agreement signed between Legacy International and CIB allowed for the introduction of “Side by Side” peace building program training for the first time in Osh, Batken, and Jalal-Abad oblasts in 2014. In 2014, the CIB and Legacy International finished 3 pilot rounds of “Side by Side” at 10 high schools in the south in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of KR (ME of the KR).

Ultimately, twenty teachers from ten pilot schools were employed and trained as program trainers; they conducted three subsequent rounds of training. The capacity of the twenty teachers was carefully and intensively improved through a nine-day Training for Trainers (TOT), two days of vocational education after the 1st round, and regular training by experts throughout the year. After three rounds of the training of the program “Side by Side” the assessment of the twenty teachers was conducted through a certification process. As a result, three certificate levels were determined. Ten teachers received “long term certification,” and can provide “Side by Side” program training for three years; seven teachers received “temporary certification” and can provide program training for one year; three teachers received a “participation” certificate because of their weak work. Each trainer felt themselves growing professionally: they have improved their educational skills. They use interactive methods in their school classes. Students have noted that the trainees started to conduct school lessons in different ways, lessons are more interesting, and students come to lessons more regularly than before.

Each round of the program lasted 6-8 weeks, with 18 lessons each (2 hours a time); they each had a public work component. SIPRI (The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), an agency that conducts external impact assessments, selected 600 students for participation, with 553 students finishing the program (61% girls and 39% boys). Groups were comprised of 20 students from various ethnic groups.



**Table 1. Ethnic representation of students, that completed the “Side by Side” program in 2014**

Program trainees had “Side by Side” lessons 3-4 days a week as an extracurricular program. Participating students were provided with a set of stationery and student manuals. As it was an extracurricular program, tea, coffee, and sandwiches were also offered to the students.

The public work implemented by students became the culmination of each round. In order to contribute to the improvement of their own communities, 553 school children implemented 60 public work projects. Because of the lack of any grant support, the trained students mobilized community resources: contemporaries, families, local authorities, NGOs, and local businesses. The trainees were quite successful in their bid for mobilizing local resources. They implemented the following types of peaceful interethnic joint projects: elderly assistance, opportunities for vulnerable young people (sports competitions, games, reading books, singing, origami with children in shelters), entertainment for and development of kindergarten and elementary school students (musical fairy tales, out-of-classes lessons on friendship, activities, etc.), drawing competitions with the theme of 'peace,' improving infrastructure, etc. The benefit from small, youth-led projects was brought to approximately 9,000 citizens.

The CIB database shows that students derived pleasure from these public work projects. At some schools, these projects became a regular initiative- even if the program was finished at their schools. Thus, 12% of these youth projects are still continuing, and the students want to make them a tradition in the following schools: school No. 1 in Uzgen, Osh oblast, Olympus School in Osh city, and in Uch-Kurgon, Batken oblast. The majority of them were concentrated on elderly and orphan assistance. This shows that students have become more caring in relation to each other. The students, who continue their own projects, have said: "Life was boring before!"

An external evaluation of the impact of "Side by Side" was conducted by SIPRI and financed by the international organization "3ie." Research was conducted, and some research events were held: a survey of of households for the intervention in and help for students' lives (1,200 households), quantifying the situation "before" and "after," holding focus groups, etc. The analysis of the preliminary research was prepared in November. The program manager also conducted her own research with students as the program's director of perception. Internal monitoring and evaluation were conducted on a constant basis. The data from SIPRI, research from the program manager, and internal monitoring and evaluation showed that results of piloting were positive.

#### *Main results:*

Student interest in the program was very high. This was supported with data collected from student interviews and tracking attendance (eliminated students total 8%). There were 553 students that finished the training in the frame of the program, and they were the students who regularly visited the program and were certified. According to the rules of the program, in order to reach and receive the certificate, students could not miss more than three lessons for the whole program. The students noted that they didn't want to miss any lessons, as the lessons were very interesting and they led them on a journey of self-discovery. They also noted the existence of a friendly environment during the program that helped them become open, active, and receptive to information. Students became more balanced. Family members and the teacher noted that students underwent positive changes in their behavior and relationships. Aggressive students who skipped classes as well as haughty and combative students became more peaceful, tolerant, respectful, and caring in relation to each other. Students who were already friends, as well as timid, or pessimistic students- they became more open, active, trusting, and confident.

The "Side by Side" program helped students overcome bullying at school and helped regulate their relationships with their family members and contemporaries. The program improved public relations with both contemporaries and adults. Conflicts at schools among 90% of the interviewed students were decreased by 50%, according to SIPRI results.

- Innovative education. Students and teachers specified that the program is innovative with both content and methodology. They recognized that they had never mastered skills like listening, diversity management, or conflict prevention in any other establishment;
- Increased interaction. Students became more sociable;
- Self-confidence and leadership. Students grew more confident and were able to take on leading roles;
- Mind-broadening. Personal prejudices and stereotypes were decreased;
- Education promotion. Student interest in studying, acquisition of new knowledge, and experience was increased.

In twenty-seven case studies from three rounds, three videos in Russian and English were prepared. The CIB and Legacy International held a series of meetings with interested parties, and two presentations were given on the pilot results at the national level.

### **2.3. CIB PROJECT “PASSPORT TO SUCCESS”**

The CIB implemented the unique educational program “Passport to Success™ in Osh city, Osh and Jalal-abad oblasts, in newly inhabited areas of Bishkek, and in Kara-Balta with the Jasa.kg program of the International Youth Fund with the financial support of USAID.

From January, 2012 to December, 2014, as a result of eight rounds of the project, specially-trained trainers conducted lessons for 946 participants from 42 communities. The Passport to Success program participants in turn implemented 69 social projects for the total amount of 2,673,081.55 soms (grants for the sum – 1,007,414.55 soms, personal contributions – 1,665,667 soms), and thus made contributions to improving their communities.

The project's target group is socially vulnerable young people, socially disenfranchised young people from large dysfunctional families with a low level of the income who dropped out of school and did not have access to higher education, jobless youth, and youth working in dangerous conditions.

The program is a complex technique consisting of 38 interactive lessons united in five main sections: developing personal qualities and abilities, developing constructive skills to cope with conflict, learning about healthy lifestyles, developing skills needed for success in their professional activity, preparation and implementation of social projects by young people that solve local community problems, cultural visits to theaters and museums, galleries, participating in the Service Week every April, and other actions, including actions organized by partner organizations within the Jasa.kg program. Program lessons are conducted in Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek.

From January 2014 to December 2014, the 7th and 8th rounds of the project were held; as a result, 238 children were trained. During the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> rounds, 946 young children were trained in total. As a result, 238 program participants initiated and implemented 15 social projects impacting more than 3,092 young children. In total, 15 projects made 161,720 soms (grants for the sum – 52,415 soms, personal contributions – 109,305 soms).

Along with the implementation of social projects within the program, participants were involved in Youth Service Week 2014 (April 2014). They totaled 319 young people, including participants of the 7<sup>th</sup> program round and previous rounds, as well as the program volunteers. At the end of the week, 3,272 people became the beneficiaries of the 13 implemented actions.

The following are examples of the program’s impact and successes:

- The program graduates give lectures and classes and implement actions and presentations at schools and communities on various themes; for example, the harm of smoking, drugs, AIDS education, and problem-solving;
- 5 program graduates took part in the “Youth Action Camp,” 19 graduates participated in the Youth Forum for PST Graduates in Osh and 33 did so in Bishkek; more than 50 program graduates participate every year in the youth forum “Zhashtar Camp” (Youth Camp);
- A collection of success stories from 39 program graduates was published to promote the program.

The given program helps participants develop self-confidence, belief in their opportunities and abilities, participate actively in various events, and influence their communities.

### **2.4. THE CIB PROJECT “PREVENTING FRAUD DURING KYRGYZSTAN’S ELECTIONS BY IMPROVING VOTER LIST ACCURACY”**

During the period of May 15 to September 10, 2014, the CIB implemented a project to sort out voter lists to eliminate registration for deceased persons. The project was implemented in Bishkek and Osh, the Sokuluk region of Chui oblast, and the Karasuu region in Osh oblast in partnership with the Central

Electoral Commission of the KR (CEC) and the Center of Informational Technologies at the KR CEC. The project's scope encompassed around 800 000 voters – that is, nearly one third of the total number of voters in Kyrgyzstan.

Data was received from the following areas:

- **Bishkek:** Bishkek City Civil Registry Office (ZAGS); 22 Municipal Territorial Directorates (Departments) of 4 regional administrations of Bishkek city; 814 residents' committees, serving 2 433 multi-story residential buildings (comprising a total of 92,789 apartments); 713 Homeowners' Associations, Housing Associations, and Housing Operations Committees, serving 1,433 multi-story residential buildings (51,926 apartments); 377 apartment committees, serving 150,430 privately owned houses;
- **Osh:** Municipal Civil Registry Offices, 12 Territorial Councils, and 1 village administration (Ayil okmotu);
- **Sokuluk, Chui Oblast:** Regional Civil Registry Office, Shopokov city administration, and 19 village administrations;
- **Karasuu, Osh Oblast:** 16 village administrations.

CIB collected data lists of deceased individuals from Civil Registry Offices, Inter-regional Territorial Directorates, and Rural Administrations before proceeding to reconcile these records with voter lists through the electronic CEC database. In total, 63,284 voter records were verified, with 36,127 records collected from Civil Registry Offices and 27,157 from the Municipal Territorial Directorates and Rural Administrations.

From the information supplied by Civil Registry Offices, CIB identified 4,680 deceased individuals whose names remained on voter lists. From the information supplied by Inter-regional Territorial Directorates and Rural Administrations, the CIB identified 3,663 deceased individuals whose names remained on voter lists.

Within this project, the CIB provided for activists and specialists for data verification with the electoral register of the KR's CEC in Bishkek and Osh, as well as holding meetings for the implementation of verification and consultation. During training, activists were provided with developed instructions for the collection and processing of obtained data, and provisions on the order of formation and use of the uniform KR voter counting system. Activists received areas of activity: regions and rural administrations (ayil okmoty). The project was carried out in partnership with the management of the Republican Registry Office that provided support and assistance for data acquisition, as well as for local self-governments.

The verification specialists visited departments and rural administrations for data acquisition regarding the deceased people in their own territories. CIB monitoring revealed citizen accounting problems with the lack of registration of deceased individuals by their relatives in registry offices, problems of low citizen knowledge regarding official registration of the deceased by their relatives, problems of incomplete and slow removal of the data of these deceased individuals from electoral registers of the KR CEC by CEC system administrators, lack of interaction between the relevant structures of the local self-governments, and also the bodies responsible for reporting the death of citizens with registry offices for reporting a death, lack of a uniform integrated format for the registration of deceased individuals, lack of death registration in the governmental bodies provided by law (Registry Office or Ayil Okmotu) for further removal from the electoral register, etc.

CIB saw an improvement in the situation concerning the lists of deceased individuals only after the removal of the data of the deceased individuals presented by the CIB to the KR CEC, and after the fulfillment of the CIB's recommendations concerning managerial improvement. Through the project results, having studied problems in the account and removal of the deceased citizens from the electoral register the CIB developed Recommendations for the corresponding authorities for improvement of the governing in relation to removal of the data on the deceased citizens from electoral registers of the KR CEC. Recommendations were developed and delivered to the KR CEC, Republican Register Office and to the Agency on affairs of the local self-government with the accompanying letters.

CIB developed the “**Legal aid for citizens registering the death of their relatives**” regarding the registration and transfer of data regarding deceased citizens to the corresponding governmental bodies. In

the course implementing this project, the CIB defined the problems concerning citizen registry in voters rolls due to the lack of registering the death of their relatives in the Registry Offices, problems of the low citizen awareness of official registration procedures. The information was developed in two languages, Kyrgyz and Russian, for legal training and as a legal aid for citizens needing to register the deceased by their relatives.

## **2.5. CIB OSH BRANCH PROJECT “INCREASING MIGRANT FAMILY CONFIDENCE THROUGH THE CREATION OF A STRONG PROTECTIVE MECHANISM FOR THEIR RIGHTS IN 8 COMMUNITIES IN THE OSH AND JALAL – ABAD OBLASTS”**

CIB Osh Branch implemented the project “Increasing Migrant Family Confidence through the Creation of a Strong Protective Mechanism for their Rights in 8 Communities in the Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts” during the period of 2012-2014. The purpose of the project was the expansion of vulnerable migrant families' access to social services in eight communities in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts through the training of 98 agents in 9 communities from the migrant families in the independent protection of rights.

### **I. Establishing cooperation with local self-governments**

The initiative groups (IG) of migrant families- agents of change who started working actively in the pilot communities- were formed at the beginning of the project. Trainings and round tables for the IG on the definition of significant community problems and their subsequent solutions, on citizens' advocacy activity and lobbying interests, and on civic involvement in decision-making processes were provided. Not only were there representatives of migrant families present, but also deputies of local councils, schools and first aid station staff, and village administration employees. “Memorandums of Cooperation” with listed party obligations were concluded between the IG and local self-governments. During the project, the number of agents of change reached 108 in 9 communities.

The IG assumed the duty of informing local self-governments on the requirements of migrant families, their conditions of accommodation, demanding fulfillment of the legal and social guarantees of the state from local self-governments, carrying out monitoring activities of local self-governments in order to assist labor migrant families that were in need, and demanding consultations and preparations for necessary documents for receiving government assistance. Migrant families' needs were brought to the attention of the local self-governments through registering IG appeals. The local self-governments assumed the duty of receiving and specifying information from the IG on labor migrants, providing the IG with KR's legislative base in relation to the labor migrants, informing the IG and local community how the help to the needy families of the labor migrants, to render assistance of the IG to help to the migrant families.

### **II. Executing basic research**

At start of the project, a needs assessment was carried out in all 9 communities. The assessment revealed the following: most migrants are working-age men who are high school graduates; not all of them find jobs and do not provide timely financial assistance to their families. There are many reasons for these problems: lack of profession; ignorance of language, legislation, culture, and traditions of the state the migrant has landed in; insufficiently explanatory work by the local self-government among the population concerning labor migration and legal and social guarantees; families of many migrants often live only on the remittances sent by labor migrants; relatives who raise the migrants' children aren't able to raise them properly, for a variety of reasons; relatives have no access to child-rearing social payments because of outdated normative legal acts; labor migrants face problems returning home. Problems related to migrant repatriation are connected with employment, recovery of health, becoming lost during labor migration (because of climatic conditions or severe work conditions), social adaptation after migration, pension registration, opening their own businesses, and receiving the appropriate credit.

The population has no knowledge or skill to appeal to migratory services required for living in and or the legal departure from the target country; there is no information on labor vacancies in Russian regions. Therefore, there is no joint systematic activity of local self-government with the migratory services of the regions. The vulnerable migrant families were defined in all communities. The database of vulnerable families with whom the IG worked was compiled. In general 281 migrant families were brought in the IG database of 9 communities, these 281 migrant families were provided with help within 2 years.

### **III. Implementing advocacy activity and lobbying**

Advocacy and lobbying training were conducted for all IGs. Migrant family needs were defined and action plans were developed. The circle of problems and advocacy campaigns were defined in the villages: lack of access to clean water, no preschools for migrants' children, no access to receiving children's benefits because of a shortage of information, etc.

### **IV. IG activities for providing psychosocial help**

Training for 5 communities was conducted by community consultants who worked with the project for psychological help (PPH) for the early conflict prevention.

Consultants and community members were trained in psychosocial help skills by the forces of community, without involving professional psychiatrists or medicine. They also helped make plans for PPH.

Each participating community received a Guideline to executing PPH in Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages. Each PPH plan was implemented by communities successfully.

Generally, PPH training for IS members was offered to those who were already involved in social activity. They were school teachers, kindergarten tutors, village administration social workers, and first aid station workers. Today, PPH is introduced in local services that have been improved in the frame of the project: in newly opened kindergartens, dress-making courses, information centers concerning migration, etc.

### **V. Training 9 initiative groups in “Improving local government services”**

All IG members were trained in improving local services. Services that needed improvement and services to which the migrant families have had no access were defined during the trainings. In every participating community, round tables were held to discuss problems plaguing local services, self-government obligations to provide services, the reasons of restriction of access of the migrants' families to the local services.

Services including preschool education, informal school education, and consultations for migration were expanded, as well as computer literacy services. Funds for migrants' families and village administrations were mobilized. With this project, each community was allocated grant assistance in the amount of 1,000-1,500 dollars.

### **VI. Pre-exit preparation**

Training 9 initiative groups on the board game “Russia – a country of opportunities?” for 17 representatives and the 9 IG (12 women and 5 men); more than 1,500 potential migrants from 9 communities and students in grades 9-11.

### **VII. Project management and questions of stability**

Special recommendations for working with the IG were developed for effective activity. Displaying stands with indicator and result descriptions for IG activity were placed in corners at the village administrations. A project map was developed. A map of eight communities with following data fixed was developed: geography, features, Initiative Groups, target group, received help, participation (in trainings), and site activity (initiatives, projects, communications). This approach helped trace a situation and review of the whole project, substantially analyze a comparative picture, problems and advantages, prerequisites for stability, and project activity.

Informational corners of help for migrants and their families were set up in each village administration. A ‘three envelope approach’ was introduced. Besides general information, two supplementary envelopes were attached: 1. Legal aid regarding migration (laws, changes in legislation, customs procedures, etc.); 2. Legal aid to migrants' families (rights and laws, opportunities, social benefits, etc.); 3. Local (village administration, regional) initiatives and actions affecting migrants' families.

Coeducation methods used by 4 IGs' representatives, as well as training attendance by the representatives of these communities' self-governments allowed communication to be built and joint decision-making to be already made at the training level. An informal network between communities, and also between the self-governments of 9 communities, was established.

Project stability results consists in the following opportunities: expansions of children's outlooks, mothers receiving PPH, migrants' relatives receiving preferential medical treatment (30 elderly people have already received preferential drugs), knowledge acquisitions in the Informational Center for migrant

families' support, computer center training for migrants' children so they can communicate with their parents via Skype, protection of migrants' interests by the IG as deputies of the local Councils and the employees of the village administrations, studying the Developed Guideline for Village Administrations in the form of recommendations for local migration policy improvements, an institutionalization of the IG in the Public Fund (4 PFs have been already established) working in the sphere of migration policy and mitigation of the consequences of migration, on saving money transferred by migrants abroad to their relatives as assistance to their families and the development of their communities, etc.

### **PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:**

The needs and requirements of social and economic rights of communities testing the negative consequences of migration were taken into consideration as a result of the project. The pilot communities' 9 IGs actively work in the 9 communities, along with 108 agents of change were involved in the project; 46% were women, having acquired lobbying and advocacy skills to protect villagers' interests, as well as consulting skills with the use of psychosocial help. The project assisted 281 migrants' families.

Training on advocacy and lobbying, psychosocial help, and improvement of local services was conducted for the IG; 3 types of activity plans were developed and implemented by their own forces, plans for PPH, and improvement of local services were supported by small grants from within the project. Informational display/stands on the expected results of the IG's activity were installed in each community. There were 9 round tables held with the participation of the Local Council deputies on the issues of health care and education; 45 members from 9 IGs participated in 38 meetings of the Local Council concerning the effective use of land, self-government budgets, and the access of vulnerable families to social services (grants, disability pensions, etc.). Four communities have been working since 2012.

**As a result of these projects, activity to increase awareness of community members subjected to migration regarding migration consequences, rights, duties, and the improvement of ability to work according to individual situations.**

More than 700 members of migrants' families from 4 communities received advice about legal departure and were trained at a meeting with the heads of regional migratory services of Osh oblast. Moreover, 4 types of booklets were developed and distributed for receiving free and preferential medicine, 500 instructions regarding the medical insurance registration, and 2 booklets regarding receiving benefits and pensions. Informational display stands were installed in 4 communities. More than 3,000 pupils were trained in a lesson devoted to a board game: "Is Russia the country of opportunities?"



Moreover, 9 IGs keep journals of appeal registrations and consultations connected with the rights of and requirements for migrants' families. Appeals and requirements are brought to the attention of local self-governments by IG members and self-government representatives. More than 1,500 consultations were provided by IG members; the Center for Russian Language Training and computer literacy for the potential migrants and those migrants' children was opened in one village administration. The members of the IG lobbied for salaries to teachers of the center from the state budget. More than 500 children have been trained so far. By the results community monitoring, the quantity of consultation requests increased by 7% after implementing the board game "Russia is the Country of Opportunities."

**As a result of the project and the activities of IG members, migrant families got access to social assistance provided by local authorities:**

A database including 281 migrant families was created in 9 communities; 9 Memorandums of Cooperation were signed by the IG and village administrations; 4 kindergartens were opened in 4 communities, more than 100 children of migrants from vulnerable families received preschool education; 109 families from 1 village administration (82 families of labor migrants, totaling 75%) received access to drinking water; 12 families got access to highland privileges, many migrant families got their late fees for electricity written off, to the sum of 116 000 soms; grants were allocated to 3 needy migrant families from 1 village administration due to IG's appeal to the main Public Council. Migrant families received the following social help: 62 persons - passport; 25 children - birth certificate; 19 people - marriage

certificates; 4 migrant families received “ulushzher” land plots - a share of a land plot (in the village Kara Daryya of Suzak oblast); birth benefits - more than 252 families; more than 500 members of migrant families took part in an educational presentation by a lawyer who was a representative of the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund on health care services; more than 3,000 vulnerable members of migrant families from 9 communities received medicine, usually costing 500 soms, free of charge from the local First Aid Station .

**As a result of this project, the following psychosocial support was provided:**

10 children from migrant families spent summer vacation in a camp for students in the village of Arslanbob; as a result of IG’s lobbying, all expenses were paid by the village administration; the Support Center for Migrants and Their Families was opened in one village administration; 46 children of migrants from one village were trained in dress-making through courses; 10 wives of migrants were employed in a mini-sewing shop that was opened specifically for them; in a workshop, 15-child daycare was opened, and more than 40 children of migrants attend additional classes on dancing and komuz (national musical instrument) playing.

**As a result of this project, local services for migrants’ families were improved:**

A total of 281 migrant families experiencing the negative consequences of migration got access to social and medical services at the local level.

In 4 target communities, public funds were used to support migrants, in addition to saving accounts transferred by migrants; more than 60 000 soms from migrants’ funds were raised. The 9 participating village administrations raised 831,000 soms; 8 policies were developed and introduced for the improvement of local services. In each community, mechanisms for expanding migrant families’ access to local services were fixed and introduced. This includes migrant’s children’s access to school and preschool education, drinking water, receiving preferential medical treatment, free information on pre-exit preparation, computer courses, etc.

The project’s results and activities were shot in 3 videos. The videos were widely promoted on social networks among village administration and migration site service employees. In total, more than 500,000 people were acquainted with the activity of these 9 communities to assist migrants’ families and the true consequences of migration.

**The NGO sector’s equal partnership in decision-making processes for political issues at the national level was a result of this project:**

With the assistance of the IG, members of migrants’ families sent an appeal to the KR JK and the KR Ministry of Social Protection for the revision children’s benefits. The changes were made in the calculations of children’s benefits: the JK came up with a solution regarding pension accounting, which were changed with consideration to portions below the standard pension established according to current KR legislation. Today, the issue is discussed in terms of excluding pensions from the calculated family income while tabulating children’s benefits.

The CIB, as a member of the platform, actively participated in recalling project legislation on “foreign agents.” More than 200 signatures from NGOs were collected for the appeal. The manager of the CIB branch participated in the Parliamentary hearings in November, 2014, and expressed the requirements of southern Kyrgyz NGOs, and listed the consequences of reducing vulnerable families’ access to assistance. As a result of these hearings, withdrawing the project legislation on “foreign agents” was recommended.

A meeting of IG members with the chairman of the JK Committee on Human Rights, Nikitenko N., took place in November, 2014. Members of migrants’ families shared information on local NGO’s useful programs and demanded the withdrawal of the bill limiting local NGO activity. The leader of the branch also participated in a campaign to bolster the image of NGOs, participated as an expert during material collection and filming the best stories from the public, and was useful in platform member activity (November-December, 2014).

From December 1-5, the leader of the organization participated in a pre-session meeting of the UN Committee on the rights to adequate housing in Geneva. The issues of infringement of the rights of

Kyrgyz NGOs regarding freedom of assembly were included in the report. The same issue was raised at a meeting with the missions of the following countries: Canada, Portugal, and Norway. Representatives of these missions expressed readiness to include these issues during the presentation of their reports to the government for the UPR (Universal Periodic Report) that was planned to be presented in Geneva on January 19, 2015.



Meeting with the city major

The leader of the branch was elected in the structure of the Public Supervisory Council (ONS) at the State Agency regarding affairs of local self-government and interethnic relations (GAMSUMO) that will allow lobbying regarding the issue of delegating authorities on migratory issues in village administrations, as well as lobbying regarding decisions of the regional Public Councils of the platform in GAMSUMO. It will also allow lobbying issues related to internal migrants and advancing laws on local services.

CIB is an expert in local network NGO development, and presented at the “Regional Humanitarian Forum.” This position, in many respects, helps the organization keep communicative contact between two networks “PHF” and “Central Asia in Movement.” Some campaigns in the region are conducted by the common efforts of these two networks.

The IGs of 9 communities, working as an informal network, developed plans for advocacy campaigns. Almost all of these communities conducted successful advocacy campaigns.

During the activity the IG, members made 38 appeals to the local self-governments regarding problems experienced by migrants’ families; 28 of them were solved in favor of the IGs. The IG members actively participated in 38 local council meetings. In 5 village administrations, an order or statement on the administrations' close cooperation with IGs to find solutions to migrants’ and their families' problems was issued; an order regarding allocation of funds from the local budget for solutions to migrants’ problems was issued in 8 village administrations; an order regarding the opening of a kindergarten for migrants’ children was issued in 4 village administrations; an order regarding the transition of a kindergarten to village administration ownership was issued in 2 village administrations; an order to open an informational center concerning migration was issued in 1 village administration; an order to open a center for Russian language and computer literacy courses for migrants’ children and potential migrants was issued in 1 village administration; an order to provide additional courses (music and dance) for migrants’ children was issued in 2 village administrations; an order to allocate funds from the local budget to use in the solution to migrants’ families’ problems, including for access to clean drinking water, was issued in 1 village administration; an order regarding the inclusion of 36 migrant families on a list of vulnerable citizens was issued in 4 village administrations.

### **VIII. Project influence and lessons learned**

The project made a huge impact at the local level in relation to the different degrees of citizen readiness for implementation of initiatives, mobilization, and comprehension of the joint initiatives and opportunities presented by the local community, including common creative projects, main active structure coverage, initiative increase, community mobilization, and aspirations to improve results. Additionally, the project influenced the strengthening of CIB opportunities, increased the capacity of IG members who became the resource for the CIB and communities, increased experimentation with network functioning at the inter-country level, exchanged knowledge and experience within the platform, developed techniques and strategic plans at the CIB Osh Branch, caused participation in advocacy at the country level through the “Central Asia in Movement” network, etc.

The CIB Osh Branch discussed the following aspects: peacemaking and varieties thereof, project results including: the dynamics of social transformations in directions like human capital, family values, the personal and professional strategy of citizens who try to maintain themselves and the families, changes in living conditions of the border and mountain territories of Kyrgyzstan, project methods, project

management and coordination, and strengths- the reputation of the organization, previous advocacy experience- and weaknesses- paternalism in communities, weak PR.

Various recommendations for the organization were developed: to consider the development of socio-political, economic, and legal contexts, to support other mechanisms of initiative groups (management, communication), to conduct more coordinated, mutually enriching activities in the “Central Asia in Movement” platform, to strengthen qualitative and quantitative works from the mass media, with a focus on social, economic, demographic, and other issues in society, to conduct an assessment of migrants' contributions in maintaining communities as well as separate families on the village level, and to hold general meetings on planning or project results directly during migrants' arrival home.

## **2.5. CIB OSH BRANCH PROJECT “RESEARCH IN ACTION: PUBLIC EFFORTS REGARDING CONFLICT PREVENTION IN FERGANA VALLEY”**

The project “Research in action: public efforts regarding conflict prevention in Fergana Valley” is a continuation of CIB Osh Branch's work with INTRAC (The International Training and Research Center, an NGO) during the two-year program: a training program on analytical methods (UPAM). The project was implemented between May and October of 2014.

Regional strategic research and a youth employment program in the priority spheres of state and private sectors were conducted in the frame of the project.

The research was conducted by the CIB Osh Branch's partner organizations, Association of Civil Society Support Centers in Jalal-Abad and EHIO of Farkhang Van Tarikuot-Tajikistan, with the assistance of INTRAC. The research focused on the development of a strategy and programs of employment in main cities/administrative centers: Hudzhant, Batken, Osh, and Jalal Abad. The partner organizations worked together towards the goal of developing skills of civil society organizations in research and analysis. A team was formed from representatives of partner NGOs and “graduates” of training seminars held within the first two years of the UPAM program to conduct research on “Youth and Employment.”

The regional “Youth and Employment” research was directed at studying one of the most topical issues for Central Asian countries today - how to involve quickly-growing groups into economic activity for their own benefit, as well as the benefit of the region. The research focused on Fergana Valley, i.e. in the most densely populated part of Central Asia, which is not only rich in agricultural resources, but also in the most ancient historical and cultural centers and key industries developed during the Soviet period.

The research goal was to assist in the promotion of economical opportunities and the protection youth labor laws through conducting policy analysis and practicing youth employment.

The relevance of the regional research was reflected in key issues on which researchers planned to find answers, including:

- i. What priority areas of employment and potential specialties for youth are considered in the policies of the 4 studied cities?
- ii. What special programs or measures were developed for the creation of long-term workplaces and the support of unemployed youth? How effective are they today? How can two separate states implement minimum rights for young people's employment (for example, through control over the conclusion of employment contracts with their employers)?
- iii. What measures have been taken to provide equal opportunities (for example, for young men and women) to training and workplace access?
- iv. What sort of cooperation is carried out between employers, the state, and public organizations with the goal of youth employment? What is the role of each of those parties?



At the moment, the research has been completed and the report on the research results is being prepared for publication. The final regional conference is planned for February 2015 for the presentation of research results in Osh with the participation of partner organizations from Jalal-Abad and Hudzhant (Tajikistan).

### III. PR, STAFF DEVELOPMENT, AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF CIB ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1. CIB ACHIEVEMENTS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- CIB became a member of international networks: Global Partnership for a Sustainable World in November 2014, as well as others;
- CIB is a member of the Consultative Council of the PA “Social Protection of the Population” and founder of the network “Network of NGOs for the Protection of Rights and the Promotion of Interests of the Children of Kyrgyzstan”;
- CIB is a member of the group-developers of an alternative concept on reforming the bodies of Kyrgyz internal affairs and a member of the Coordination Council of the Civic Union “For Reforms and Results,” which works to promote reforms in the existing system;
- CIB Osh Branch is a coordinator and an expert in the development of the local NGO network “Regional Humanitarian Forum”: networks of NGOs from Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts working in the spheres of human rights, gender, peace-building, social problems, providing water, etc.
- The CIB Osh Branch was included in the Coordination Council of NGOs for assisting in the restoration of Osh and Jalal- Abad and in the Financial Commission;
- CIB continues to be a member of the Network of NGOs working to monitor ABR projects;
- The director of the CIB is a member of the general meeting of the PA “Counterpart-Sheriktesh”; she is a member of a working group on monitoring Kyrgyzstan's external loans; she is a member of the Estimated Commission of the Ministry of Culture and Information, consisting of all sectors of society for an nomination of an award in the field of KR tourism development, the “Kyrgyz Tourism Awards,” and participated in meetings on the consideration of competitive documents from campaigns working in a given sphere;
- CIB became a participant in a meeting of the Geneva Center of Democratic Control and Democratic Processes (DCAF) in the armed forces- the international fund for safety issues with a Kyrgyz NGO;
- The manager of the CIB Osh Branch, Gulgaky Mamasalieva, was elected to the public supervisory board at the State Agency on Affairs of Local Self-Governments and Interethnic Relations (GAMSUMO);
- The CIB Osh Branch entered the networks “A Platform in Action” - a network on migration, in a network of Central Asian NGOs cooperation in the sphere of rights to adequate housing to protect those rights, as well as a network of experts in conflict sensitivity; the CIB Osh Branch is a member of the Commission on Management of Municipal Lands;
- The manager of the CIB Osh Branch was invited to Geneva, Switzerland to present on the protection of the right to adequate housing at a meeting of a UN committee on social and economic problems in November, 2014 in Geneva, as well as in December 1-5, 2015;
- The US Ambassador to the KR, Pamela Spratlen, gave a survey speech after the end of her service in the KR; she noted the protection of democratic achievements in Kyrgyzstan by the NGO sector, including CIB specifically;
- The manager of the project, Kuttubaeva Asel, earned a Masters Diploma in Practice and Political Development after training at the Geneva Institute of International Relations (Switzerland) on January 29, 2015;
- CIB was included on the lists of the KR JK database of civil society organizations, intended to render assistance to the further development of a professional JK and parliamentarism in the KR;

- CIB was included in the structure of the Working Commission for monitoring external loans; CIB was included in the NGO Working Group on “Recommendations of FATF and Economic Regulation of Activity of NGOs”;
- CIB participated in a presentation of the OSCE Center on research results regarding identification of scales and reasons for corruption in Kyrgyzstan on October 22, 2015;
- The number of CIB partners visiting its Facebook page increased, totaling 1,300 by the end of the year;
- Et cetera.

### **3.2. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF CIB ACTIVITY**

During 2014, CIB continued its activity depending on time requirements, programs, and project tasks. CIB effectively implemented those projects, having made an invaluable contribution to the increase in capacity of the younger generation in peace-building skills, life skills, local communities concerned with issues of development, projects for advancing the partnership and improvement of public administrations, research projects on and opportunities for youth, issues of youth employment, support to migrants, psychosocial help, etc.

CIB participated in the protection of different vulnerable demographic groups: pensioners, children, afflicted persons, etc., as well as the NGO sector during the aggressive informational discrediting of the NGO sector by individuals and groups via initiatives to introduce legislation to label NGOs as “foreign agents.”