

## **Examples on social accountability (2016)**

### **Kyrgyzstan: Voice and Accountability project (VAP).**

#### **1. What is our intervention, why are we doing this? What do we want to change in a given context?**

Voice and Accountability: Citizens' participation and oversight of budget processes in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Project implements an innovative Model of Community engagement in the local budgetary process in the target municipalities, which enables local communities to voice their needs and demand for accountability from local self-governments (LSGs). The change the project aims to achieve is to make it possible for citizens to get involved in local decision-making processes and inform them with the needs and priorities of local communities.

#### **2. Who is involved, who is our target group?**

The project's beneficiaries are at 2 levels of interventions:

- at local level: over 200'000 rural citizens, around 250 municipal servants and 350 local councils of 27 municipalities in 3 oblasts (Chui, Naryn and Osh).
- at national level – Parliament, Ministry of Finance, State Agency for Local Self Governments and Interethnic Relations, state Personnel Service.

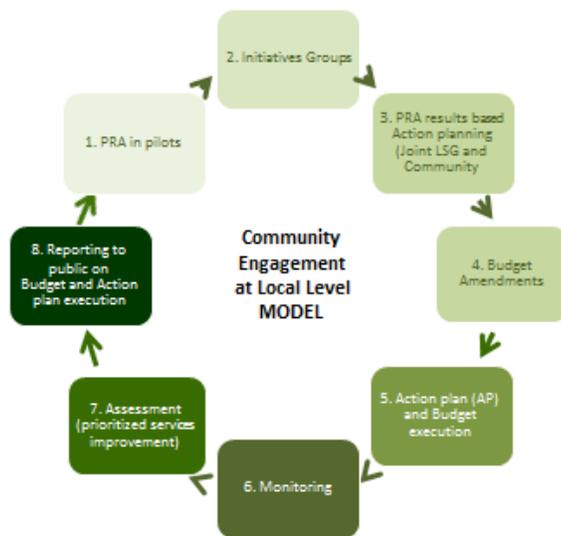
#### **3. What social accountability instruments are we using?**

The community-driven budgetary framework consists of the following steps: initial needs assessment through Participatory Rural Assessments (PRAs), identification of local leaders during PRAs and design of action plans by leaders jointly with LSGs, allocation of budget funds for the solution of assessed concerns, public budget hearings, public monitoring of action plans implementation, public assessment of local services and LSGs' reporting to local communities on implementation of the joint action plans. This model has a cycle nature, which is tied to both budget and work planning of LSGs. Active representatives of local communities together with appropriate LSG officials and members of Local Councils will form Initiative Groups – participants of public service management. The Model suggests for these Initiative groups to be actively involved at all stages of the cycle.

**4. What works well and what important results have been achieved with this?**

In the first phase of its implementation (2011-2015) the Project has introduced this model of community engagement in local budgetary process in the two provinces of Issyk-Kul and Jalalabad. It has first been piloted in 28 target municipalities and has strengthened the capacity of local communities to voice their needs, and raise demand for accountability from LSGs. Local population of the pilot municipalities of the Phase I benefited from the improved governing and managing capacities of LSGs as they became more responsive to local initiatives and accountable to local communities by addressing concerns voiced during 250 PRA sessions. LSGs engaged in a dialogue with trained local communities during budget discussions. There were over 80 budget hearings, which resulted in 176 changes introduced into local budgets to address the voiced needs. Over 700'000 people benefited directly and indirectly from 113 projects implemented with the grant program support.

The project has also been active at policy level with a focus on improvement of the legislation to enhance proper decentralization process. In Phase I it produced over 90 legal recommendations to improve normative documents, and it has overall significantly contributed



to overturn a real threat to decentralization reforms in 2012. In addition, LSGs have been empowered and are now responsible for administration of local taxes; the National legislation provides for delegation of state functions to LSGs with the requirement for adequate funding; the State Personnel Service (SPS) conducts tenders for public service training delivery as proposed by the Model for training of municipal servants developed by the project.

The community-driven budgetary framework has been institutionalized by the State Agency for Local Self-Governments and Interethnic Relations and introduced into local charters by 384 municipalities

out of 453, or 84,7% of all municipalities in the country (October 2015 data). However, the Model's proper application needs to be strengthened, which is the goal of the Phase II of the project.

#### **5. What are major challenges, risks?**

The application of the Model revealed that LSGs accountability and community engagement in local budgetary process increased the level of expectations among local communities towards LSGs in terms of service delivery. However the enabling environment for LSGs better performance is still weak. It remains to be critical to ensure continuation of central policy work including: (i) transparency and predictability of inter-governmental transfers and own/shared revenues, i.e. with little funds LSGs cannot meet the expectations of their communities; (ii) focus on delegated state authorities, i.e. LSGs can only be accountable to citizens, if they have adequate responsibility and funding for the development of their communities; (iii) personnel development system, i.e. LSGs need human resources and capacities to be able to fulfill their duties. In future the project should engage a wider set of non-state partners, local NGOs and Association of LSGs in its advocacy efforts at national level. International experience and expertise should be more actively utilized as a mean of argumentation for policy development.