

Third Annual Conference Report for Central Asia

Community Development in Rural Areas of Central Asia

27–28 April 2004 in Osh, Kyrgyzstan

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INTRAC

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Anne Garbutt, Oxford 2004

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Summary

This report provides a written record of the third INTRAC conference held in Osh *oblast*, Kyrgyzstan, on 27–28 April 2004. The conference brought together ninety representatives ranging from senior government officials and international agencies to very small community-based organisations (CBOs) from all five Central Asian republics.

The main focus of the conference was to allow the participants time to reflect on their own experiences in community development and to share those experiences with like-minded people.

Day one was opened with an exciting presentation of the INTRAC community development research, by Bahodir Fozilhujaev (Uzbekistan), Chinara Tashbaeva, (Kyrgyzstan) and Kulnara Djamankulova (Kazakhstan). They introduced the themes to be discussed over the two days of the conference, including:

- Community mobilisation
- Gender and the role of women in community development
- Relations between CBOs and local authorities
- The nature and role of traditional community institutions
- Rural poverty and CBOs
- The role of leaders in CBOs
- The legal framework of CBOs
- Economic activities of CBOs

These themes were fully debated on day one and groups examined ways forward on day two.

The group work was interspersed with short academic presentations on themes such as:

- Community development interventions by international agencies
- Sustainability of CBOs
- Integrating community development with economic development
- Empowerment of local communities

Finally, participants broke up into country groups to identify priorities for community development work in their own countries.

It is hoped that the report of the proceedings will be of interest and use to all those working in community development in Central Asia.

List of Abbreviations

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
CBO	community-based organisation
CD	community development
CDA	community development adviser
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CEN	Community Empowerment Network (Kyrgyzstan)
CSO	civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ICAP	INTRAC's Central Asia Programme
INGO	international NGO
INTRAC	The International NGO Training and Research Centre
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NGOSO	NGO support organisation
PR	public relations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SLLPC	Sustainable Livelihoods Project

1. Introduction

INTRAC has been working in Central Asia since 1994, providing capacity building support to the non-profit sector. This conference was a culmination of a community development (CD) component within the programme of 'Institutional Development of Civil Society in Central Asia', funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The first two years of the CD component were spent researching how communities are formed and how the relationships within communities influence rural peoples' lives, in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The researchers or community development advisors (CDAs) then analysed their research and began to develop methodologies for engaging rural communities in Central Asia.

The third INTRAC international conference in Central Asia, 'Community Development in Rural Areas of Central Asia' was held in Osh *oblast*, Kyrgyzstan on 27–28 April 2004. The participants included representatives of community-based organisations (CBOs), local government officials, various civil society groups, NGOs, international NGOs and donor representatives from all five Central Asian states. The participant who travelled furthest was from an American health alliance based in the USA. All participants are involved in or have an interest in working with community development. In total, more than ninety people participated, with strong representation from all five Central Asian republics.

The conference was designed to be a participatory experience, aimed at helping the varied participants share their experiences of community development work in Central Asia. The themes of the conference emerged from the research work and subsequently an INTRAC occasional paper¹. The facilitators were selected from the participants who, alongside INTRAC, have demonstrated that they are also building on the body of knowledge slowly growing in the region. The conference provided the occasion for INTRAC to disseminate the CDA research findings and stimulate debate, encouraging other participants to share their valuable learning experiences.

2. Background Paper

INTRAC has gathered a considerable body of knowledge over the past ten years while working on the institutional development of civil society in Central Asia. A piece of community development research carried out during 2003, in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, made a significant contribution to this. The paper, presented to the third annual ICAP conference, provides empirical data taken from a series of case studies of community development initiatives, plus a set of recommendations. The lessons learned during the research were grouped under five main themes:

- The individual and the community-based organisation
- The resilience of soviet institutions
- Pre-Soviet practices and forms of social organisation
- Perceptions of gender and 'women's role'
- Community engagement with local government

The aim of the paper (and the conference) was to encourage development agencies which are implementing (or plan to implement) community level projects in the region to undertake a reflection of their practice, guided by the five themes identified.

¹ INTRAC Occasional Papers Series No. 40, 'Community Development in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan' by Lucy Earle with Bahodir Fozilhujaev, Chinara Tashbaeva and Kulnara Djamankulova.

3. Proceedings (Day One)

Theme: Rural communities in Central Asia: what are their main characteristics? And what is their role in development?

3.1 Welcome and Introductions

Simon Forrester, INTRAC Country Manager for Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, welcomed participants to Osh *oblast* in Kyrgyzstan. Interestingly, one of INTRAC's first Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) events was held in the very same venue eight years earlier. It was appropriate to meet there again for INTRAC's first conference on community development. Simon thanked INTRAC partners for their hard work in making the conference possible: Centre InterBilim, and the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Project (SLLPC) Osh office.

Asiya Sasykbaeva, Director of Centre InterBilim, welcomed representation from the five different states in Central Asia and thanked them for visiting such a remote part of her country. She hoped we would all gain considerable knowledge about community development in rural communities.

Bermet Ubaidilaeva, Regional Co-ordinator for SLLPC Osh, hoped the conference would help solve some of the problems faced whilst implementing community development initiatives in rural areas of the region.

Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev, President of the Association of Local Governments, greeted the conference participants and said that the association is the first of its kind in Central Asia and is ready to cooperate with other Central Asian countries on local governance development. This work is impossible without CBOs: nobody knows better than local people how to get mobilised and what problems are topical in Kyrgyzstan. This year was declared the Year of Social Mobilisation in Kyrgyzstan, so it is a good opportunity for CBOs to realise their aims.

Natalia Kryuchkova, representative of the British government's Department for International Development (DFID) Kazakhstan office, congratulated all those present on the opening of the conference, commenting upon the high professional level of participants from all the five Central Asian countries. In spite of the individual features of all the participant countries, they have much in common. Therefore it is very important that the issues of poverty reduction are posed at a regional conference.

3.2 Presentations of the INTRAC Research

The three local researchers (INTRAC community development advisors) Bahodir Fozilhujaev from Uzbekistan, Kulnara Djamankulova from Kazakhstan and Chinara Tashbaeva from Kyrgyzstan presented the main findings of the research paper to the conference.

The environment for CD in Central Asia is much influenced by the history of community life and traditions, government policy and donor interventions, and by the nature and aims of civil society organisations (CSOs) themselves. Communities possess strong social capital and many traditional mechanisms of mutual aid, support, and individual leadership. Recently, more attention has been paid to communities by both national government and external donors, in particular regarding their potential role in implementing infrastructure and social support programmes. Most of the projects which CSOs are invited to join are short-term in nature: both NGOs (mainly town based) and CBOs (village based) can play a role.

The external environment varies from country to country. In general, Kazakhstan has fewer NGOs working on community development, there is no local self-government institution and donor support is less. Whereas in Kyrgyzstan, government decentralisation and a higher level of donor investment means a more favourable environment for civil society. In Uzbekistan, the traditional *mahalla* communities occupy key ground between civil society and a strong state.

Short definitions were presented to the conference:

- Community-based organisation (CBO): ‘a group of people from the community, joining together to satisfy the needs of their own community, including social, economic and other kinds of problems and interests. They can be limited originally by territory, social group and activity types’.
- Community development (CD): ‘a process during which communities improve their abilities to solve their own problems, get more access to basic services (education, health) and entrepreneurship, acquire more power and rights in making decisions related to their own life, becoming active participants in civic process within society’.

The three researchers/CDAs described briefly the methodology by which the case studies were collected and written. This included analysis of a wide variety of reports and general information, and the conducting of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The CDAs and an Oxford based INTRAC researcher, Lucy Earle, spent considerable time in villages in the three countries, collecting and checking information with local people and organisations, strengthening INTRAC’s close contacts with local civil society. Methodological support was also received from INTRAC’s Research Department in the UK. It was hoped that the conference would provide further opportunity to share information on the current dynamics of rural communities in the region, and lessons learned from other CD initiatives in them. The CDAs gave a very brief outline of each of the topics to be covered on Day One: traditional community institutions and practices such as *ashar*, gender and the role of women, the role of CBO leaders, relations between CBOs and local government, and finally the legal and financial challenges facing CBOs.

The participants were then given the opportunity to ask the CDAs questions for clarification. The most interesting ones had to do with *legitimacy*, *social capital* and *new methods of work*. One participant asked why the research concluded that CBOs lack legitimacy. And how can this problem be solved? In answer the CDAs noted that *legitimacy* is the CBOs’ ability to carry out their activities; this means something more than purely their legal status. At present many CBOs are under the control of either donors or NGOSOs where they are involved in implementation of individual projects. *Social capital* includes everything, related to communication, linkages, relationships, mutual understanding both inside the community and between communities. There are different forms of communication and we set ourselves the aim of identifying the best practices and solutions to emerging problems. For whom are the *new methods of work* designated? They are representative of new strategies for organisations working with CBOs. These organisations can be local NGOs and NGOSOs, international NGOs, official agencies and of course CBOs themselves.

3.3 Group Work Sessions 1 and 2

The first day of the conference involved two group work sessions, in each of which participants chose one of four groups. Each group was set the task of exploring the characteristics of community-based organisations (the context within which they work, what works and what doesn’t work). Four groups met before lunch and four groups after lunch and each produced a flip chart with recommendations. A short summary of the findings and defining topics discussed in each group is recorded below.

At the end of day one a representative from each group met to discuss the findings from the day and to develop one or two key questions from each working group that would help with the discussions on day two. These key questions are recorded at the end of the group findings.

Community mobilisation

Facilitator: Saliya Akulova (Kyrgyzstan)

Resource person: Chinara Tashbaeva (INTRAC)

This group considered the issues of community mobilisation through traditional methods, based on the example of *ashar* (as presented by Chinara Tashbaeva, INTRAC) as a tool for strengthening community capacities, and its advantages and disadvantages in mobilising people. Participants also discussed the role of traditional institutions such as *aksakals* (respected elders in the community), leaders, relations between relatives, Imams (religious leaders), the *mahalla* (government appointed community leaders), and so on. The negative side of traditional institutions in decision making can be seen when the opinions and interests of women and youth are not sufficiently taken into account during discussions (an example was given of a canal construction project, where as a result women receive water one hour later than men). This clearly illustrates gender inequality in participation and decision making.

Mobilisation was considered as a process of participation, protection and lobbying of interests, putting together resources and 'stirring up' the population to solve their own problems. Who is interested in community mobilisation: local authorities or international organisations? Is mobilisation just a temporary fashion, or does it have a continuing role? During the discussions, participants came to the conclusion that *mobilisation is a continuous process based on the interest of communities and other institutions and on problems occurring either on a long-term or a short-term basis*. They considered that mobilisation should continue to influence decision making, especially at the local level, as well as development of social partnership between various institutions.

Key Question: Is community mobilisation a means to an end or a purpose in itself?

Gender and the role of women in community development

Facilitator: Zhanat Iliazova (Kazakhstan)

Resource person: Marifat Abdullaeva (Tajikistan)

This group considered the issue of women's status in rural regions based on the example of Tajikistan (as presented by Marifat Abdullaeva, ASTI). Participants looked at how to involve women in community affairs, with a particular view to women's status in rural regions and the urgent need to increase their participation in public life. This included a discussion of how to bring into harmony the main horizontal and vertical structures of Central Asian society.

During discussion participants noted that gender equality means equality of rights for representatives of both sexes, and whilst working with public groups it is necessary to observe a gender strategy, first revealing how the project and programme relates to gender, and then working out how to strengthen women's role in the society, since the status of women in Central Asia is lower than men in social, economic and political terms. Women are more subjected to various forms of violence. One of the important indicators of achievement of gender equality is the extent of women's participation in public life, by means of training seminars, campaigns and education in the family. Equal participation of women in active

public life means a change of stereotypes, and the activism of women's organisations is necessary.

Key Questions: Are communities ready to acknowledge gender issues? How can communities promote gender balance?

Relations between community-based organisations and local government

Facilitator: Kazybek Abraliev (Kyrgyzstan)

Resource person: Tursunoy Isomitdinova (Tajikistan)

This group examined cooperation between CBOs and local authorities, and existing obstacles and problems between them. Tursunoy Isomitdinova made a presentation based on her own work experience. She explained how, despite the initial obstacles, success in practical projects has persuaded representatives of local authorities to officially recognise her work. Participants agreed that with motivation and hard work, plus the ability to compromise, it is possible to achieve almost anything.

Participants compared the present situation in the different states of the Central Asia with regard to relationships between CBOs and local authorities. For example, in Uzbekistan CBOs are rather isolated from local authorities, whereas in Kyrgyzstan a favourable environment for CBO growth has been created even though there is frequent competition between them and local authorities, which hampers cooperation. To avoid this it is necessary to carry out explanatory work and training among representatives of both government and civil society.

Key Question: How can we build effective relationships between community groups and local authorities?

The nature and role of traditional community institutions

Facilitator: Zainab Salieva (Bukhara Information & Cultural Centre, Uzbekistan)

Resource person: Shukhrat Djuraev (Labour & Social Protection Problems Research Centre, Uzbekistan)

Shukhrat Djuraev gave information on existing or traditional CBOs in Uzbekistan (e.g. public associations, trade unions, women's organisations, various social movements, political parties, and *mahalla* committees), also noting new kinds of CBOs (e.g. condominium associations).

Participants from various regions of Central Asia then made short presentations to add to the list of traditional associations in the community. The question of whether it is good or bad to use traditional institutions was answered by listing the positives (e.g. mobilisation of people, election of leaders of CBOs) and negatives (e.g. authoritarian management, use of CBO for own interests). Participants also discussed both positive and negative sides of donor support for the activities of traditional institutions. Very often international donor interventions have a limited geographical coverage, which does not take into account the real needs of the local population, resulting in increased dependency. Participants noted the importance of choosing the right approaches to various kinds of traditional institutions and offered a number of new ways of involving them in social development.

Key Question: Who makes decisions and who participates?

Community-based organisations and rural poverty

Facilitator: Kambar Adishov (Kyrgyzstan)

Resource person: Daniel Sultanbekov (CDF, Kyrgyzstan)

Representative of the CDF (Comprehensive Development Framework) secretariat in Kyrgyzstan, Daniel Sultanbekov informed participants about the national programme for 2001–2010, its poverty analysis and most important figures. Proceeding from his presentation, participants defined CBOs' role and contribution, and the difficulties and opportunities in proposing amendments or new projects to various poverty reduction programmes. The discussion showed that CBOs still face difficulties in participation in such programmes, such as mistrust on the part of other institutions, absence of legal status, and so on. However, despite such obstacles, CBOs have key advantages in direct work with the population as they are more informed about people's real problems, the causes of these problems and possible ways to solve them. They can understand and analyse the local situation better and are able to predict the project's likely results more accurately. CBOs not only make a practical contribution to poverty reduction programmes, they also help to involve donors and can act as a guarantor in some programmes.

Key Questions: How can communities measure the effects of community development? Do communities have the capacity to do the measuring?

Inside community-based organisations and the role of the leader

Facilitator: Sara Imbarova (Uzbekistan)

Resource person: Marhabat Akhmedova (Kazakhstan)

Using a case study introduced by Marhabat Akhmedova from Djambul Province, Kazakhstan, participants considered the role of local CBO leaders such as the former communist party figure Omorbek Zhumabekov who has managed to achieve great success. This example showed the following basic characteristics of a good leader: high thoughts, strong moral principles, vital organisational and professional skills. The group discussed leadership issues common in CBOs (which are a new kind of public institution and as such are now experiencing problems of growth and development). The group also talked about the election of leaders.

The discussion indicated that leaders do exist, though there are all too few of them. Leaders are people showing the harmonious interaction of the most diverse sides of the person: social, economic, personal and political. However, the selection of a leader at present remains the main problem inside a CBO. One of the existing ways to do it is general participation through decision making i.e. voting. One of the important aspects to be considered while electing a leader is his / her skill to design necessary PR activities through elections of initiative groups or at the general meeting of CBO members.

Key Questions: What is the influence of leaders on community development? Who chooses the community leader and how?

The legal and financial environment for community-based organisations

Facilitator: Abdusalim Sattorov (Tajikistan)

Resource person: Bakhtiyar Kamaldinov (Kyrgyzstan)

As the discussion revealed, the issue of legal status or legitimacy is a major factor in CBOs' development. In different countries the process of legal registration and the laws or regulations concerning CBOs' registration currently operate differently. In Tajikistan there is

a law on CBOs registration that enables organisations to assert their rights and protect their interests, while in Turkmenistan it is much more difficult to register. However, it was noted that this is not the only problem, since in Turkmenistan about 2,000 CBOs are registered but only 20 per cent of them are operating. As to the situation in Uzbekistan there are corresponding laws, however the absence of experts (such as lawyers), plus financial difficulties (issues connected with the payment of taxes) all lead to serious restrictions for CBOs. In almost all countries CBOs are expected to pay the same taxes as commercial organisations. Finally, the question was posed as to whether registration is necessary or not. Participants agreed that it is necessary, if it has been fully thought through.

Key Questions: How can the legitimacy of community groups at all levels be maintained? Do donor interventions promote sustainability or lead to further dependency?

Community-based organisations – community or economic activities?

Facilitators: Nodira Rakhmanberdieva (Tajikistan), and Zainab Salieva (Uzbekistan)
Resource person: Abdulla Narzullaev (Uzbekistan)

The number of participants exceeded 25, so the group was divided into two sub-groups.

Abdulla Narzullaev (Foundation of Crafts Revival 'Ibodullo Narzullaev') shared his work experience in the revival of traditional crafts in Bukhara province, and solving social problems for rural citizens. Participants expressed various opinions on the issue, asking whether the problems were social or economic? Should they be addressed by CBOs, and can the community be engaged in commercial activities, or other business? The presenters noted that social and economic problems cannot be solved separately. The solving of social problems results in changes in the economic conditions of the population. Equally, changes in the economic sphere result in solving many social problems. Participants came to the conclusion that economic programmes result in changes in the social sphere and vice versa, and, consequently, CBOs should not limit their activity to solving only social problems, but rather consider them together with economic problems.

Key Question: What is the priority for community development, economic or social issues?

3.4 Facilitators' Meeting

At the end of day one the facilitators of each group met with the conference organisers to analyse the day's work and develop the key questions from each group's work as described above. The facilitators selected one person to present their findings to conference.

4. Proceedings (Day Two)

Theme: How can we improve community development initiatives throughout Central Asia?

4.1 Presentation of Day One Findings

A representative from the facilitators' group presented the analysis of day one work and presented the 13 key questions in a plenary session. The conference was asked to consider the questions and to use the findings to help with the positive focus planned for day two.

4.2 Presentation: Community Development Interventions by International Agencies (Lucy Earle, INTRAC Researcher)

Approaches to community development in Central Asia can be viewed on a 'continuum'. At one extreme, communities are involved in projects as a cost-efficient way to put infrastructure in place and keep it maintained. At the other extreme, community members become involved in the same type of infrastructure projects in order for them to develop their skills and achieve a better sense of 'community', and for marginalised groups to become empowered. Whilst actors in the region might like to think that they are motivated by the social benefits that communities can accrue through involvement in infrastructure development projects, the way in which donors measure their efforts suggests a stronger emphasis on quantifiable outcomes (e.g. the number of homes connected to a gas supply). The more instrumental or 'method' approach to community development may mean that projects are completed more quickly, but donors often fail to examine power relationships within communities and risk augmenting inequalities. On the other hand, the 'process' approach which puts social development before installation of infrastructure, and calls for real participation, is time-consuming. Furthermore, it is very difficult, requires commitment in terms of resources from the donor, and its results are hard to measure. If, however, donors in Central Asia do want to promote this type of development, they must examine their practice in terms of who they engage with in the community; how participation, inclusion and representation can be fostered at community level; the time frame within which they think they can achieve these goals, and how they measure their efforts.

4.3 Presentation: Sustainability of Community-Based Organisations (Aman Nusupov and Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev, Community Empowerment Network, Kyrgyzstan)

Aman Nusupov and Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev presented the work of the Community Empowerment Network Kyrgyzstan, which had held its conference on the previous day in the same venue, with an agenda linked to the INTRAC conference and many common participants. The CEN conference had been given the results of a piece of research on sustainability of CBOs; many community groups are formed for one-off projects, but then disappear. CBOs have asked for this research to be produced in simple language for local activists. It is essential to unite in territorial initiative committees, to bring the national poverty reduction plans down to the level of the village. To achieve our aims we will need to create new mechanisms of collaboration with local government, to exchange experience of CD across borders in the region and to develop new training methodologies including distance learning and internet based systems. The final outcome of the CEN conference was that participation at the village level is vital since nobody knows the problems better than local people.

4.4 Presentation: Integrating Community Development with Economic Development (Mamasaid Mamasaidov, Aga Khan Foundation)

Mamasaid Mamasaidov presented the Mountain Societies Development and Support Programme (MSDSP) of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in Tajikistan. The AKF programme began with humanitarian aid in the early 1990s, and by 1996 was involved in major infrastructure projects including mini hydro-electric stations. In 1998 the programme began to develop village organisations as the vehicle for local development strategies and from 2002 there has been a capacity development programme in rural areas. The aim is to make the village organisations autonomous and self-managing. Each has its own structure, mission and values, with clear criteria for popular participation, also a village development fund and a budget to enable work in key expenditure areas such as health, education, and micro-credit. Originally MSDSP worked in the Gorno-Badakshan area of Tajikistan, then the programme was extended to the Raksht Valley and other mountainous areas of the country where the *jaamat* is the traditional form of community self-management; here the aim is to link closely with the *jaamat*. All aspects of the AKF programme are regularly reviewed, and their experience has been used by UNDP for its rural development programme.

4.5 Group Work Session 3

The conference divided into six groups. Each group was set the task of exploring ideas of how practitioners would be able to improve the process, methods, institutions and sustainability of community development practice. Each group produced a flip chart of recommendations to the conference. A short summary of the findings and any defining topics discussed are recorded below.

Enhancing the role of community-based organisations in poverty reduction programmes

Facilitator: Chinara Tashbaeva (INTRAC)

In this group the issues of how to strengthen CBOs' capacities, their access to and influence on the evaluation of poverty reduction programmes, were raised. The experience of participants showed that CBO representatives should be constantly involved in project implementation from the beginning to the end, starting from development of poverty indicators in the given village community, and completing with an estimation of the results of the work done. Why? Because the community has more information on the pre-project situation in the village and can determine the impact of the project or the programme and changes in the given territory. But this raises another problem: CBO capacity or opportunities to carry out monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Lack of experts on PRA and M&E can be an obstacle in revealing the needs of the village and carrying out a correct estimation of the results and the method of project implementation. CBOs need to strengthen their capacities (for example by training key people, leaders or a particular group of members, an exchange of experience with other communities, and so on). Moreover, CBOs should be involved in all stages of project/programme implementation, as well as in evaluation of outcomes; and traditional and specific features of the particular locality should be taken into account.

Improving capacity building for community-based organisations and local government

Facilitator: Bahodir Fozilhodjaev, (INTRAC)

During this discussion, the question about who should be the bridge between CBOs and local authorities was raised several times. According to the law, local authorities (at *oblast* or *rayon* level) have no right to interfere with NGO activities; this means that local self-management institutions (such as *mahalla* or *aiyl-okmutu*) play a key role as intermediaries between local authorities and CBOs. In this connection, it is necessary to pay attention to coordination of mutual relations between CBOs and local government and the cooperation between them. In Tajikistan all decisions signed by the city's *hakim* (mayor) are enforced by *mahallas* at local level. Problems are solved together with questions raised at the *Steering Committee on Social Partnership Development* chaired by the city mayor and consisting of representatives of state structures, NGOs and the business sector. In Kyrgyzstan the role of local *kenesh'* (council) deputies first of all is defined by the fact that he/she should not be accountable to the state bodies.

To understand who participates in the decision-making process, it is useful to consider the process of budget approval at various levels of local administration, in other words, *how transparent the budget should be*. In Kyrgyzstan, delegates are invited to take part in meetings of the elders (*kurultai of aksakals*) and to decide where and how much money to spend. To approve regional budgets in Parliament, public hearings are held with as many as 300 representatives from NGOs attending. For Uzbekistan, where in general there are no mechanisms for monitoring budget formulation and allocation, the experience of Kyrgyzstan is very relevant! In Tajikistan at the *jaamat* (community) level the budget is not discussed. It becomes accessible to the public only when its approved version is published. In Kazakhstan there is the 'Open Budget' initiative, however so far it exists only as a beautiful theory. International organisations support many initiatives working in this direction.

The group raised three important issues: *transparency, participation and responsibility*. There is however a question of risk: are CBOs ready to assume *responsibility* for possible risks? (In accepting support, they will need to think about negative impacts too.)

Strengthening gender approach in community development programmes

Facilitator: Kulnara Djamankulova (INTRAC)

Only six participants took part in the discussion of this topic. They analysed the results of discussions on the first day on the theme 'gender and women's role in community development', and answered the following questions:

- How can reasonable balance between men and women be achieved?
- Are communities ready to accept gender issues?

Participants tried to develop a set of recommendations where gender aspects are taken into account fully when working with CBOs. They agreed that with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and rapid growth of unemployment and labour migration, the status of women in republics of Central Asia has fallen sharply. Many men have given up trying to solve social problems, and the whole burden of providing for families has fallen on the shoulders of women. There is a growth in the responsibility of women at the same time as an absence of women's rights. In addition, in rural regions of Central Asia traditional cultural institutions are very strong, and it is necessary to take into account all the complexities and subtleties when addressing gender issues.

Next steps for self-help groups and micro-credit programmes

Facilitator: Nellya Shevchenko (Sustainable Livelihoods Project, Kyrgyzstan)

This group compared the situation and laws on micro-financing in four countries of Central Asia. For example, in Tajikistan a law on micro-loans instead of micro-financing has been approved. According to this law a credit union, a micro-loan company or micro-loan fund can be established. In Kyrgyzstan there is a law on credit unions, and every *aiyl okmotu* establishes a credit union. Unfortunately not all laws are enforced. In contrast to the other countries, in Uzbekistan the programme on micro-financing is not so advanced. People receive loans from banks, and interest rates are higher and banks are corrupt. In Kazakhstan there are no financial privileges/discounts for receiving loans, while such advantages can be negotiated in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The analysis given shows that the development of programmes on micro-financing in the countries of Central Asia is at various levels.

Using grant schemes and community investment funds more effectively

Facilitator: Erkinbek Kasybekov (Counterpart International, Kyrgyzstan)

The discussion highlighted that the *problems of efficiency* are almost the same for everyone. The most important factor in success is economic and social efficiency. The group touched on the problems associated with the substitution of village needs by the needs of grant recipients and NGOs, which can frequently be seen in practice. Participants made some recommendations for donor organisations on the design of grant programmes, which it was noted often do not take into account the local context in Central Asia. Another urgent problem with grant programmes is their problem-oriented approach – rather than an allocation of donors' financial and material assistance irrespective of degree of importance and urgency of problems (under the discretion of donors or by request of grant programmes). The establishment of community funds and their efficient control is important for efficiency. CBOs can learn how to do this via training courses and looking at other non-commercial organisations' successful experience. The availability of a practical manual and materials accounting for the local context would also be very useful. It is also important to develop transparency mechanisms in non-commercial organisations themselves. In brief, efficiency is achievement of the result divided into quantity and a unit of cost.

4.6 Presentation: Empowerment of Local Communities (Anne Garbutt, INTRAC Regional Manager FSU)

The conference returned to plenary for presentations of findings and to hear a presentation on empowerment in local communities. Empowerment involves re-balancing the structure of power within a community by addressing the control of resources, control of decisions, control of information and physical domination, thereby leading to communities being better able to influence their own lives. There is a need to recognise the complexities, strengths and limitations within any community, looking at where accountability lies and who holds the power. What is the true power base in any community? Project planners are often unaware of the power relationships within a community and marginal members of communities can continue to be excluded. It is important to remember that participatory exercises can be manipulated by local leaders when the process is led by someone outside the community.

There is a need to look at the vulnerability of women, remembering that there are tensions between civil codes (such as positive discrimination of women or quota systems) and traditional codes (the role of women in the household). Women can be exposed to the worst of all systems and need to be included in any community development planning process.

Finally there is a need to *analyse* power relations before planning a community development initiative. The influence of clan relationships in a community should be recognised, and the question should be asked: who has power to influence local élites? We need to be aware of who the regional patrons are who must be won over before working in any community, and how men's power over women can affect any community development project adversely.

4.7 Group Work Session 4

Conference participants finally broke into five country groups and were asked to identify priorities for community development work in their own country, and to draw up a mini work plan that they could realistically take back with them after the conference. Full records of the flip charts produced are attached (Appendix 3). Each group also presented a summary of their findings to the conference, recorded below:

Kyrgyzstan

Facilitator: Chinara Tashbaeva (INTRAC)

Representatives of various sectors (NGO, public sector, international organisations, communities) exchanged ideas on lessons learnt, new information, working groups' conclusions, plans for the future (follow-up activities) and their views on the conference as a whole. During the conference ideas on exchange visits between some countries of Central Asia, in particular Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Erkinbek Kasybekov, Counterpart International) have appeared. The main task for participants was to ensure sustainability of local NGOs, including CBOs, in the future and to solve the problem of dependence on donor organisations: how to avoid it and in which ways? Participants emphasised dissemination of self-help group concepts among the population, development of micro-financing activities, raising of internal funds and strengthening income-generating activities as possible ways out of the above situation.

Participants suggested the production of the conference report in a form accessible to all, (i.e. in addition to the main report, to issue information materials for communities and to distribute them among all stakeholders).

Kazakhstan

Facilitator: Kulnara Djamankulova (INTRAC)

Participants considered lessons learned during the conference and their subsequent practical application. After the comparative analysis, representatives of Kazakhstan came to a conclusion that the other countries of Central Asia give much more attention to community development than they do. This is probably due to the facts that 60 per cent of the Kazakh population live in cities; that donor programmes on community development are targeted to the other four countries; and that many donor organisations are pulling out of Kazakhstan because it is a middle income country and most donors are focusing their programmes on poverty alleviation.

Practical applications of lessons learnt, such as new micro-financing schemes discovered during the conference as a result of exchange of experience and information will be aimed at communities' development, and in particular at overcoming poverty and deepening knowledge of NGOs on empowerment.

Uzbekistan

Facilitator: Bahodir Fozilhodjaev (INTRAC)

Seventeen representatives of traditional community organisations, international non-governmental organisations, NGOs and state structures joined the Kazakh discussion group.

Participants shared their impressions, knowledge gained and experience received at the conference and during discussions in small groups. They emphasised that the conference helped them to identify new directions and prospects in their work, and revealed opportunities for joint projects and cooperation between various structures of civil society.

They outlined specific targets and actions (for example to share the materials of the conference with co-workers, to conduct a round table, to facilitate a poverty analysis by communities), which they will definitely carry out in their respective regions after returning home. These actions have been included in a general plan of action by the delegation from Uzbekistan for post conference actions. The head of the resource centre from Nukus suggested collecting positive operational experience and the information on community development and bringing out a book on the experience of Uzbekistan in community development.

Tajikistan

Facilitators: Nuritdin Karshiboev (NANSMIT) and Nodira Rakhmanberdieva (Manizha)

Participants in this group reviewed the most important themes of the conference, considered key issues, drew up conclusions on their implementation in practice, and drafted an action plan (follow-up activities).

The most urgent issues connected with CBOs are their mobilisation, their role in poverty reduction, strengthening their capacities and involvement and participation of women in community development programmes. These defined the basic priorities for follow-up activities. They include the establishment of a legal framework for CBOs and community activities, increasing the role of state structures, international organisations, and traditional institutions in community development, creation of a favourable environment to ensure their prosperity, and further study into the impact of labour migration on community development.

As in the other groups, the Tajik contingent flagged up the importance of developing a micro-finance activity, with the sole purpose of raising internal funds for communities. The Tajik group also noted they would like INTRAC work expanded, with increased communications.

Turkmenistan

Facilitator: Anne Garbutt (INTRAC)

Throughout Turkmenistan people are aware (through the mass media) of the problems between NGOs and official leaders. The four NGO representatives from Turkmenistan provided accounts that clearly showed that activism of any kind is almost impossible.

During discussion, potential opportunities for cooperation between NGOs and INTRAC were considered and such problem areas as infrastructure, equipment and social objectives were identified. While developing main strategic areas for future cooperation, the following approaches were seen as most useful ways forward for community development in

Turkmenistan: training by INTRAC (so as to make participants more familiar with its training techniques); research conducted 'under the roof' of other international organisations; development of partners from other Central Asian countries, and the organisation of conferences (for the time being outside Turkmenistan).

4.8 Closing Session

In the closing session the organisers of the conference (represented by Asiya Sasykbaeva) and government officials (represented by Daniel Sultanbekov) were joined by four 'wise people' – participants who were asked to contribute some personal reflections on the proceedings and the important themes raised.

Daniel Sultanbekov (CDF Secretariat, President Administration, Kyrgyzstan)

Daniel spoke on behalf of government participants. He thanked the conference organisers and commented favourably on the active participation at the inter-sectoral level. The CDF (Comprehensive Development Framework) is adopted in Kyrgyzstan until 2010. Its major goal is reduction of poverty, which is especially serious in rural areas: 39 per cent in towns, 47 per cent in villages. In Kyrgyzstan 65 per cent of the population live in rural areas. One cannot depend only on the state to reduce poverty. The secretariat chooses to work closely with CBOs, NGOs, political parties and other CSOs to work towards reducing poverty in Kyrgyzstan. Daniel appreciated two aspects of the conference work: firstly, firstly he very much liked the fact that in Kyrgyzstan there are real professionals with an in-depth understanding of the problem. It is evident what a great potential the civil society sector has and it would be absurd for government officials not to support it. Secondly, the inter-regional and inter-sectoral character of the conference has made it possible to learn from neighbouring countries, as well as to exchange opinions with representatives of state bodies, international agencies and NGOs. This has been a good forum for developing work and solving problems!

Asiya Sasykbaeva (Centre InterBillim)

Asiya thanked everyone for such a warm and committed atmosphere. She also thanked INTRAC staff who managed to bring together participants from all five Central Asian countries, enabling them to take home the knowledge acquired. Asiya said that a very interesting element of INTRAC work is the follow-up methodology used, when they observe the practical application of the acquired knowledge and skills at participants' work places. The next step is to organise a follow-up conference in six months' time.

Commentaries from the group of 'wise people'

Zainab Salieva, Bukhara: 'I would like to begin with the words "nothing is as permanent as change". During two days we disagreed with each other and changed opinions. Lucy's presentation helped me to form a different view and understanding of my work over the last four years. I had an opportunity to compare my experience with that of the speakers and other participants; hearing your colleagues' opinions in the course of discussion helps to enlarge the scope of your vision. We represent our communities and we all bear responsibility for the way of life we choose. Participation policy is characteristic of "strong democracy"; in other words, this is citizens' governance and not government on behalf of the citizens'.

Bakhtiyar Kamaldinov, Talas: 'Let me, a patriot of my community, express my opinion. Maybe we did not cover absolutely all the questions set at this conference. But I asked myself two questions and drew the following conclusions:

1. What did I contribute to the conference? I shared my experience and heard about other people's experiences.
2. What am I taking home to my community? Previously we talked a lot about mobilisation, but did not fully understand it. Now I understand better that mobilisation is related to political, economic and cultural phenomena. Not only must CBOs be involved in participation processes, but also state officials. It is necessary to hold public hearings, involving lots of people.'

Jane Cooper, Tajikistan: 'I came from Canada, where I was a leader of several CBOs. The objective of my visit was to get to know and to learn some new ideas, both for my work in Tajikistan, and for my life in my native village in Canada. I wanted to learn what problems CBOs working in this area are confronted with. Many issues were raised during the conference related to the interaction between local governments and CBOs; for example, will CBOs begin to compete with local governments, instead of cooperating with them? The participants have pointed out that we need a new model of local government and CBO interaction. Speakers raised the issue of the distribution of power in the community. I have a clear impression that people in Central Asia are dissatisfied with the power allocation between CBOs, between regions and between governments. In conclusion, I would like to add that we are all part of the community, and community development is not what we do for someone else; it is what we do for ourselves.'

Kurbonali Partoev, Dushanbe: 'This is an international conference of experienced specialists. It is impossible to know everything, but everybody knows something. The conference coincided with the 10th anniversary of INTRAC's work in Kyrgyzstan. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate INTRAC on the anniversary and thank INTRAC and the Department for International Development (DFID) for the opportunity to participate in the conference.'

Finally, the conference was closed by Charles Buxton, Programme Manager Central Asia, INTRAC. Charlie thanked participants for their valuable contributions. The results of the conference make up an agenda for strengthening community work around the region. Charlie thanked colleagues, speakers, interpreters, and the partner organisations Centre InterBilim Osh and Sustainable Livelihoods Project Osh for their very valuable assistance.

Appendix 1: List of Participants

Name	Organisation	Position
NGOs		
KYRGYZSTAN		
Saliya Akulova	PU Civil Initiative Development Centre	Programme Coordinator
Ulukbek Abdyrazakov	Youth Initiative Group 'Uchkun'	Coordinator
Bakhtiyar Kamaldinov	PU 'Jamaattar Kelechegi'	President
Elena Kim	Resource Centre for Elderly (Umyt-Balykchy)	Public Relations Officer/Project Officer
Kazybek Abraliev	Initiative Support Centre 'Consulting'	Manager
Janybek Atabekov	Community Karatyube, PU 'Aiyl korku'	Leader
Narynbek Japarov	PU 'Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society'	Local Coordinator
Asiya Sasykbaeva	Centre InterBilim	Director
Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev	Association of a local government of villages and community of KR	President
Makharamhon Tilavoldieva	NGO 'Mehr-Shafkat'	Director
Janybek Boipuev	CBO	Leader
Rakhmatilla Abdykerimov	Work group, SLLPC Osh	Project Worker
KAZAKHSTAN		
Nilzia Rakhisheva	Zhambyl Oblast Women's Council	Chairman
Marhabat Akhmedova	Women's Council, Chimkent	Chairman
Galina Meermanova	NGO 'Moldir'	Deputy Director
Gulmira Jamanova	CASDIN	Director
Zhanat Iliazova	NGO 'Baspana'	Information Education Officer
Aslan Tanekenov	Association of Civil Society Development	Project Officer
TAJIKISTAN		
Tursunoy Isomitdinova	WCA 'Nilufar'	Chairman
Marifat Abdullaeva	ASTI, Khojend	Coordinator
Abdusalim Sattorov	NGO 'Chashma'	Manager of credit department
Nodira Rakhmanberdieva	NGO 'Manizha'	Executive Director
Kurbonali Partoev	PO 'Khamkori Tarakkiyot'	Chairman
Rano Kosymova	PC PARASTOR	Executive Director
Nuritdin Karshiboev	NANSMIT	Director
Abuhaliil Aminjonov	NGO 'Mehrangez'	Programme Coordinator
TURKMENISTAN		
Roza Kuzakhmedova	NGO Keik Okara	Director
Oleg Guchgeldiev	Local Lead Consultant	Caspian Environmental Programme
Natalya Shabunts	NGO Civic Dignity	Coordinator
Elena Lipatova	Agro project in Dashoguz 'Support of private agriculture'	Programme Coordinator
Maya Ovezova	Centre for Farmers	Director

UZBEKISTAN		
Zainab Salieva	BI&CC	Director
Gulhan Asanova	CSP 'Tashabbus' Navoi	Director
Dildora Amirkulova	Development & support centre 'Umid' Karshi	Director
Oysora Ubaydullayeva	WSC Nekuz	Leader
Sara Imbarova	CSDC Nukus	Director
Abdulla Narzullaev	'I.Narzullaev' Foundation	Chairman
Gulbahor Tangirova	CISC 'Tarakkiyot'	Director
Rano Kuldasheva	Women's Association 'Fido'	Programme Manager
Charos Maksudova	Business Women's Association CEN Project	Programme Coordinator
Alauddin Mambetkarimov	NGO 'Azamat'	Leader
GOVERNMENT		
KYRGYZSTAN		
Erkin Alybaev	Aiyl Oktotu Krasny Vostok	Chief
Abdygany Aliev	Akimiat of Nookat Raion	Deputy Akim
Daniel Sultanbekov	Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) Secretariat	Specialist of Social Development Department
KAZAKHSTAN		
Altynbek Asaubekov	Information Centre of Jambyl Oblast	Specialist
TAJIKISTAN		
Zokir Khandjarov	Khukumat of Tursunzade city	Chief of Department
Firuzga Gulyamova	Municipality of Dushanbe city	Deputy Chief of Department
Zulfiya Sharipova	Khukumat of Temur Malik District	Chief of Department
UZBEKISTAN		
Nigmatulla Abdullaev	'Mahalla' Foundation	Deputy Chairman
Shukhrat Djuraev	Labour & Social Protection Problems Research Centre (Ministry of Labour)	Senior Officer
Marat Khalmuratov	Rural Citizens' Assembly, Khojely, Karakalpakstan	Chairman
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS		
KYRGYZSTAN		
Kambar Adishov	Sustainable Livelihoods Project (SLLPC) Osh	Facilitator
Nellya Shevchenko	Sustainable Livelihoods Project	
Bermet Ubaidilaeva	SLLPC Osh	Regional Coordinator
Catherine Hine	Help Age International	Central Asia Officer
Emil Sultanbaev	DCCA	Director
Baktybek Tumonbaev	Countryside Support Programme (mountain region)	Manager
Erkinbek Kasybekov	Counterpart Consortium	Country Director
Saltanat Dospaeva	UNDP Poverty Reduction	Policy Adviser

	Programme	
Aman Nusupov	Counterpart Consortium	Programme Coordinator
Anara Choitonbaeva	Rural Water Supply DFID Project	Coordinator for Community Mobilisation
Arsen Aidaraliev	Kyrgyz State Medical Academy	Programme Officer
KAZAKHSTAN		
Natalia Kryuchkova	DFID Kazakhstan	Programme Officer
Kathleen Canaboy	American International Health Alliance (AIHA)	Consultant
TAJIKISTAN		
Galina Shablina	Save the Children, USA	Project Officer
Thomas John McCormack	Save the Children, USA	Deputy Field Officer Director - Programmes
Elena Mamadnazarova	UNDP	Community Development Advisor
Madina Nurmatova	Fergana Valley Citizens' Rights Advocacy Network	Member of the Coordinating Council
Mamasaid Mamasaidov	Mountain Societies Development Programme	Trainer
Gulhumon Eshkuvatova	UNDP	Project Officer
Jane Cooper	Aga Khan Foundation	Head of Community Development Unit
UZBEKISTAN		
Umida Maniyazova	Mercy Corps	Project Assistant
Zafar Oripov	USAID/Zdravplus Tashkent	NGO & Grants Programme Manager
Matthew Thomas Morrison	CHF International	Programme Development Manager
Marie-Carin von Gumpfenberg	OSCE Centre in Tashkent	Political Officer
INTRAC		
Anne Garbutt	INTRAC	Regional Manager FSU
Lucy Earle	INTRAC	Researcher
Charles Buxton	INTRAC	Programme Manager
Simon Forrester	INTRAC	Country Manager Kyrgyzstan/Kazakhstan
Baktygul Sandybaeva	INTRAC	Accountant
Lola Umatalieva	INTRAC	Programme Assistant Kyrgyzstan
Chinara Tashbaeva	INTRAC	CDA Kyrgyzstan
Mirgul Bektaeva	INTRAC	Local Consultant
Kulnara Djamankulova	INTRAC	CDA Kazakhstan
Natalya Laptieva	INTRAC	Programme Assistant Kazakhstan
Rahima Mirikramova	INTRAC	Programme Assistant Uzbekistan
Bahodir Fozilhudjaev	INTRAC	CDA Uzbekistan
Elena Tsoy		Interpreter
Jyldyz Bekembaeva		Interpreter

Appendix 2: Conference Programme

	DAY 1 Theme: rural communities in Central Asia What are their main characteristics? What is their role in development?	DAY 2 Theme: how to improve community development.
9.00-10.30	<p>Registration, Welcome and Introductions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INTRAC and local partner 2. Kyrgyzstan Government representative <p>INTRAC CDA presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bahodir Fozilhujaev – Uzbekistan 2. Kulnara Djamankulova – Kazakhstan 3. Chinara Tashbaeva – Kyrgyzstan <p>4. The view from the community: CBO speaker</p> <p>Short questions to speakers</p>	<p>Analysis of issues raised on Day 1 by working group: presentation and questions (20 mins)</p> <p>Plenary session – international agency speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CD interventions by international agencies – INTRAC 2. Sustainability of CBOs – Community Empowerment Network, Kyrgyzstan 3. Integrating CD with economic development – Aga Khan Foundation (40 mins) <p>Start third set of thematic groups working on how to improve the process, methods, institutions, and sustainability of CD (30 mins)</p>
10.30-11.00	Coffee break	Coffee break
11.00-12.30	<p>Thematic groups to discuss the character of community organisations, the context they work in, what works and what doesn't work. Each group to include CBO, NGO, local government and INGO/donor representatives</p> <p>First set of groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community mobilisation 2. Gender and the role of women in CD 3. Relations between CBOs and local government 4. The nature and role of traditional community institutions 	<p>Continuation of group work -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing the role of CBOs in poverty reduction programmes 2. Improving capacity building for CBOs and local government 3. Next steps for self-help groups and micro-credit programmes 4. Using grant schemes and community investment funds more effectively 5. How to defend community rights using the democratic process 6. Improving networking and programme coordination
12.30-13.30	Lunch	Lunch
13.30-15.00	<p>Second set of groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CBOs and rural poverty 2. Inside CBOs: the role of the leader 3. Challenges facing CBOs: the legal and financial environment 4. CBOs – community or economic activities? 5. CBOs and NGOs – same or different? 	<p>Brief report back from groups</p> <p>Plenary speaker – INTRAC Empowerment of local communities, and reply to issues raised</p> <p>Plenary discussion of issues raised on both days</p>
15.00-15.30	Coffee break	Coffee break
15.30-17.00	<p>Report back from the groups / flip chart display the results of group work</p>	<p>Country groups to evaluate the work of the conference and identify priorities for CD work</p>

	<p>Short plenary session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NGOSO speaker 2. Local self-government speaker (There will be one plenary speaker from each of the five countries) <p>Short discussion in plenary of issues raised</p>	<p>Short presentations in plenary session, discussion of lessons learned</p> <p>Closing statements - INTRAC and local partners</p> <p>Conference closes</p>
18.30	Dinner	Reception
Evening	Analysis of results of day 1 by conference working group with representatives from each country	

Appendix 3: Results of Country Group Work

Kazakhstan

Lessons learnt

- Regional approach
- Opportunity for comparative analysis
- Communities as one of the means to achieve poverty reduction
- The result depends on involvement both of the state and civil society
- Empowerment of the community
- Micro-crediting scheme/experience of the Aga Khan Foundation
- Social business experience
- Decentralisation of power
- Breaking of established images

Next steps

- Further activity of INTRAC in the region
- Continue working with communities and involve various civil society institutes
- Improve knowledge of NGO on empowerment of community
- Exchange of experience
- Is the state ready to overtake the role of donor in the development of rural communities?

Kyrgyzstan

Lessons learnt

- Much information received at the conference on various issues of community development
- Exchange visits between countries
- A report on the conference should be made available in the form of easily accessible information for communities
- Further efforts needed for community development
- Analysis and evaluation of the accumulated experience for distribution
- Pay attention to cooperative activities within the country
- 'Awaken' the powers that be
- Continuation of the CEN programme
- Improvement of coordination (so that government establishes priorities in cooperation with civil society, etc.)
- Improvement of mechanism of sustainability of communities
- No dependence on donors should be created
- Better understanding of micro-financing institutions
- Local NGOs should provide more information to the community – contacting donors
- A sustainable community will be more empowered

Next steps

- Use all the materials
- Raise internal funds through training on marketing, business planning
- Organisation of exchange visits to other countries (e.g. Tajikistan)
- Contact information in other countries
- Relations with other communities
- Involvement of religious communities in community mobilisation
- Distribution of information on the concept of self-help groups (Counterpart, Mehr Shavkat, 'Umut')
- Change of approach considering social exclusion and involvement
- Seminar on fair management
- Creation of SSG with involvement of men (mixed groups)
- Study of the materials on empowerment and practical application
- Financial stability of NGOs and CBOs
- Change of approach to CD (avoid orientation to donors, enhance ability to work independently, creative methods)
- Increase responsibility through grants, if possible through credits

Tajikistan

Lessons learnt

- Activation of CBOs
- Mitigation of poverty through community development
- Increase of the role of women in community development
- Capacity development of CBO through training programmes
- Involvement of socially excluded groups in the development process
- Observation of participatory principles

Next steps

- Creation of a legal base for activity of CBOs and communities
- Implementation of educational programmes with the purpose of advocacy
- Role of state structures in community development
- Creation of favourable conditions for CBO activity
- Coordination of efforts of NGOs, local authorities and state structures
- Institutionalisation of CBOs
- To hear the voice of community representatives
- Extension of contacts with INTRAC
- Development of micro-crediting activity with CBOs
- Study and involvement of traditional institutes for community development
- Consider impact of labour migration on community development
- Create internet forum for conference participants (contact INTRAC for details)
- Share information on the activity of coalitions and legal issues

Turkmenistan

Lessons learnt

- Sources of traditional support remain the same as when the state took all upon itself (at the time of the USSR)
- Now – at the level of former *kolkhozes* (collective farms)/*sovkhozes* (state farms) there is no formal structure, but there are respected people
- Decisions are not made in the ‘community’
- The state of the infrastructures is worsening – e.g. water supply
- There is a need for communities and the support of local authorities
- If there are elders with support, the local authorities will support them

Next steps

- Community to get involved in work on the infrastructure: roads, water (drinking), pumps, wells, schools, medical points
- Need to find sources of basic material and equipment for communities including books, libraries
- Need for training by INTRAC in CD approaches and methods, such as how to work with representatives of state bodies; research methods for NGOs
- Research into who are community representatives
- Conduct a survey as to which NGOs or CBOs are able to operate ‘under the shelter’ of local authorities
- Survey CSOs active within projects
- Try to identify partners in other countries
- Send representatives of Turkmen public organisations (CSOs) to conferences and other events abroad to reduce isolation
- Try to mitigate current difficulties facing CSOs – the new Law on Public Organisations; the government’s ‘negative attitude’ to NGOs, micro-finance and local authority decentralisation
- Be aware of possible restrictions
- A recent plus is the government’s cancellation of the regulation requiring exit visa permissions

Uzbekistan

Lessons learnt

- Experience exchange, information is specific
- Recommendations for donor organisations developed
- Identification of new perspectives, directions, and feedback from others
- Analysis of own activity on CD
- New contacts, communications
- A many-sided focus on CD
- Knowledge, skills of democratic governance in the fields
- Cooperation of CBOs with other institutes
- Positive practice between local self-government bodies
- Joint ideas, projects
- Donors should not replace local authority
- Transparency, accountability

Next steps

Participants in this group made a plan in which members were identified to work on the following list of activities (full details available from INTRAC):

- INTRAC to produce and distribute a report on the conference
- Publication of conference reports in the Uzbek mass media
- Create local CD information bulletin
- Meeting in the *mahalla* and *khokimiat* with information on the conference
- Include the lessons learnt in the website development
- To study the law, the existing base on micro-credit unions and provide assistance
- To use conference materials in local trainings
- Organisation of local round tables, forums and *oblast* level conferences on CD
- Creation of the association of Local Self-Government
- To include training programme for *mahalla* leaders on the creation of CBOs
- Increase knowledge of those in NGOs who deal with CD
- Work with women on legal issues
- Review of the power structure in communities
- Organisation of a training workshop for NGOs and *mahalla* leaders on 'Social marketing and resource mobilisation'
- Analysis of community opinions on poverty
- Creation of a working information group at *oblast* level
- Communication of information by the participants of the conference to all their clients
- Issue of a resource book on CD (INTRAC)
- Collection of information on CD (INTRAC)