

Narrative report on a working seminar
“Expanding opportunities of youth organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic focusing on inclusive and fair society development”

Date: October 30-31, 2018.
Venue: L’Mira Hotel, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Expert of the first day: Ms Sydykova Zaure
Expert of the second day: Ms Toralieva Gulnur

Work seminar was organized for representatives of youth organizations operating in the Kyrgyz Republic. Based on the goals of the two-day seminar, youth organizations discussed the issue of coordinating efforts to develop partnerships that are more effective and address youth issues at all levels. A network organization, the Association of Young Organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic (also known as AYOKR), was selected as the platform for coordinating partnerships for youth organizations, and this Association is mainly composed of larger youth organizations.

The agenda was divided into 2 parts to effectively organize the seminar:

- Conduct an assessment of the needs of the organization to identify internal problems and obstacles;
- Assessing the external environment of AYOKR and communicating with external stakeholders;

Strengths and weaknesses of each AYOKR member were viewed during the first day. To ensure time efficiency, the [questionnaire](#) was sent to all member organizations in advance with the following questions:

- **What areas does your organization focus on?**
- **What areas would your organization be interested to develop its capacity in?**
- **Please select from the list the strongest skills you consider your organization possesses?**
- **Please select from the list the skills you consider your organization needs to improve?**

The results of the questionnaire were given in the involvement matrix of members in AYOKR activities (Annex 2).

Based on the results of the survey, the discussion topics were formed to identify further measures to mitigate the problem. The discussion led to the development of a plan to increase the capacity of member organizations (Annex 3). Under the program, AYOKR plans to organize a series of capacity building training for member organizations in 2018:

- Research running, advocacy;
- Monitoring, analysis running;
- Partnership with local and national state authorities, monitoring and analysis running;

- Fundraising for non-commercial organizations;

The seminar also enabled participants to identify training requirements for member organizations. There are many theory-based trainings that lack the practice of mitigating internal constraints within the organization. Fundraising was defined as a priority because most organizations are financially unstable due to lack of organizational financial sustainability. In addition, most organizations do not have revenue-generating activities to run projects and businesses that are free of donor funds.

Another topic of discussion is the issue of positioning an organization as an independent institution with a specific mission and objectives, which can unite other organizations and mitigate them at the political level. As a solution, it was recommended to conduct external communications, monitor and analyse operational training to establish a network of partnerships with national authorities.

The activities of each youth organization were not repeated, but they complement the activities of other organizations. They don't have a platform to share the methods, skills, tools, data and information to work with young people, so it was suggested that such a platform should be established at the national level. The National Youth Affairs and Sports Bureau has a number of country-based platforms, including information on Agency activities and news. In addition to conferences and forums, there is a lack of a comprehensive platform for coordinating youth organization activities. All organizations use a variety of sources of information when forecasting, and in most cases, it leads to a lack of sustainable vision for project outcomes/outputs. Discussions on this topic led to recommendations for the establishment of such an online platform database, including all developments and documents within the AYOKR business framework developed by youth organizations. Such a platform will be able to compile existing data, plans, strategy documents and national regulations. It will serve as a “single window” that will prioritize youth issues. Managing such a platform may become a think tank that focuses on youth work.

In the first day of the discussion, participants viewed the success cases of building and strengthening network organizations based on the case of Network Medeterrian (NetMed). Participants conducted a comparative analysis of AYOKR and NetMed, then discussed the launch of the Central Asia Youth Network. Unlike NetMed, AYOKR is more focused on promotional activities in the youth policy. Several member organizations have experience in conducting international activities (Central Asia):

- “Youth of Osh” Public Union (summer volunteer labour camps, summer school of democracy);
- “IDEA CA” international debate association (Academy of Debates named after Ch. Aitmatov, Central Asian Debate Tournament);
- “Y-peer” network of equal learning (“Theatre as an impact tool” forum);
- “Youth Development Institute” Public Union (“Youth and state – cooperation for development” conference);

These organizations are ready to share existing testing tools with the aim of establishing a platform for youth integration in Central Asia. Participants recommended a series of thematic activities at the Central Asian level in this initiative in 2019 (a short description of these initiatives is attached to the report). It is worth mentioning that the above-mentioned organizations have established contacts with youth organizations in all Central Asian countries, so that it is easy to establish a network organization.

Specific initiatives will focus on strengthening the cooperation of representatives of youth organizations in Central Asia and building a sustainable institutional network. A joint plan will be developed in these initiatives as the main coordination document; the plan will provide comprehensive results/outcomes at the Central Asian level.

It is worth emphasizing that basic research and youth organization meetings should be coordinated to determine the steps of cooperation before planning and establishing a network organization. The study will serve as a starting point for identifying priorities/areas for future network organization activities/operations. We recommend a series of workshops and conferences in all four countries.

On the second day of the workshop, participants elaborated on external constraints and AYOKR issues as well as mitigation measures. In order to alleviate this problem, a brief training on AYOKR's communication strategy and political orientation were held. The main topics focused on the following: "Given AYOKR is an advocacy organization, does not repeat the activities of member organizations, what department activities will AYOKR carry out? What topics will AYOKR cover at the political level?" The discussion produced a document that defined the framework for the AYOKR activities at the political level in 2019 (Annex 3), with a focus on the following objectives:

- Expand youth participation in decision-making processes at the local and national levels;
- Expand opportunities for youth to obtain state and municipal services (health, education and social);

Report prepared by Mr Salimov Sarvar (individual consultant).