

Ulmasova Muyassar, Deputy Head of Mirmahmudov AO:
"IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE GREAT SUCCESS IN ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS OF THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT'S WORK AND ADDRESSING ISSUES OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE, EVEN BEING A NON-TARGET MUNICIPALITY OF ANY PROJECT"

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In the spring of 2017, the "Voice of Citizens and Accountability of Local Self-Government: Budget Process" Project implemented by the Development Policy Institute with the financial support of the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (hereinafter - the Project), presented the Model of Citizen Participation in decision-making at the local level, including budget process, opportunities for cooperation as a target municipality and access to the Project's resources for all rural municipalities in Osh oblast. Heads and deputy heads of local self-government bodies (LSGs) took part in the event. Among them were the head of ayil okmotu (AO) of Mirmahmudov ayil aymak (AA) of Nookat rayon Gafarov Shuhrab and his deputy Ulmasova Muyassar. The Project announced a competition to select the target municipalities, which the Mirmahmudov AA's application was submitted to. However, according to the results of an independent Selection Committee it was not selected. Received refusal in cooperation in the framework of TM, however, it did not limit access to the resources. Soon, LSG again received an invitation from the Project this time to take part in a training workshop, later to another workshop, etc. Deputy head of LSG, Ulmasova Muyassar, on behalf of the municipality, contin-



ued cooperation and active participation in various capacity building activities of the Project that were conducted in target Gulistan ayil aimak: training seminars and workshops, PRA sessions, focus groups, gatherings and others. Having obtained theoretical knowledge and practical skills, Muyassar spoke with the head of AO and the deputies of ayil kenesh (AK) about events held in Gulistan and sought their support to hold same in Mirmahmudov AA. Leadership of AO and AK deputies supported this initiative and decided to create a working group of 9 people consisting of 6 ayil bashchy, investment specialist of LGS, deputy of AK and deputy head of LSG, Ulmasova Muyassar. The working group discussed organizational issues and developed a calendar of events, during which 24 PRA sessions were held to identify priority problems (PP) in each of 6 villages of aimak with participation of

342 persons (among them 154 women) from the local community. According to the results of the activities undertaken with the help of local NGO "Center for Civil Society Support Nookat" in mobilization of the population, practically the same 7 PPs were identified: drinking water, preschool education, budget transparency, school education, roads, street lighting and electrification in new buildings. In order to solve the problems identified, 2 initiative groups (IG) were created consisting of 20 representatives of the local community, AK deputies and employees of AO. With their participation, Joint Action Plan (JAP) was developed to address priority problems approved by ayil kenesh. In addition, Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Group (SM&EG) was established by the decision of AK, which included 10 people from among the AK deputies, LSG leaders and AO employees.



In November 2017, Muyassar took part in a regional level exchange tour for representatives of LSG bodies on the topic: “Practice of organizing and holding public events (gathering) to discuss draft JAP” conducted by the Project on the basis of Gulistan AA, where LSG bodies discussed draft JAPs with their residents to address identified priority problems of local importance. Representatives of 4 target municipalities of the Project and 14 non-target aimaks of Nookat rayon participated in the meeting in Gulistan AA with purpose of studying the experience of neighbors in applying knowledge. After learning the experience of holding social event with other representatives of LSGs, Muyassar decided to immediately introduce the experience gained in her municipality by organizing a village gathering. The Working Group summarized the results of all PRA activities carried out and presented it at the rural gathering, with participation of 154 people (78 women), where the draft JAP and composition of JM&EG was also discussed with the local community.

Having gained knowledge in the Project trainings, taking part directly in involving citizens by LSG - Gulistan AO supported by the

Project, Muyassar replicated the experience in her community. Gulistan really became a “model” for neighbors. Continuing to participate in the trainings and other activities held by the Project, following the “model”, the local community of Mirmahmudov AA in 2018 successfully participated in the grant program.

“Information that our project proposal has scored enough points, and we were on the list of municipalities that won the contest, was a pleasant surprise for us. Of course, there was hope, but we doubted until the last, because we are still a non-target municipality. After all, there is an opinion that such projects always biased. But now we know that all our efforts were not in vain, and that even being the non-target municipality one can win such contests. Due to the fact that we replicated the work of the Project in our aimak, having participated in the training and seminars, and taking part in exchange tours of best practices with the target municipalities, our local budget will receive a grant of 1 million soms, which will be directed towards creation and improvement preschool education in our aimak. After our victory, our people increased their confidence in aiyl okmotu. Also our perception of our work and work with the local community has changed. We realized that by providing transparency of information about the local budget and discussing it with the public, we make our work easier. We also learned how to show everything easily: a short description of the budget is prepared with diagrams, and our presentation slides are decorated with pictures, we prepare the Civil Budget, etc. In addition, thanks to the Project, we are now working very closely, inviting each other to all events, exchanging information and news”.

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Deputy Head of Mirmahmudov AO