

Times change.

Real leaders of the local community became deputies of aiyl kenesh and what they were able to start doing.

The story of how the leaders of the local community who never dreamed of becoming deputies of aiyl kenesh and coming to power, finally became the deputies and had the opportunity to participate in the governance of the whole municipality.



It is with confidence to say that a great achievement of the “Voice of Citizens and Accountability of Local Self-Government: Budget Process” Project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by the Development Policy Institute (hereinafter referred to as the Project) that the leaders of the local communities in two target municipalities of the Project became deputies of AK in the past elections to local keneshes. These are people who are not indifferent to the future of their village, aimak, and were not afraid of taking the responsibility; they are the actual leaders of the local communities, who were nominated and elected by the people.

Today the story will be about one of them - Kusova Larisa Ivanovna.

Larisa Ivanovna is 61 years old pensioner, a member of the local Women Council, chairperson of the Commission for Social Affairs in aiyl okmotu (AO), neighborhood volunteer, chairperson of the JM&EG. Since recently, she is the deputy of aiyl kenesh of the new convocation in Boroldoi AA (Kemin rayon, Chui oblast).

During the Soviet Union, Boroldoi village was a millionaire collective

farm, but with the collapse of all industry and livestock, people lost faith in power and everyone began to live on their own. There were different times. At times even there was no electricity for weeks (was supplied only for one hour) for non-payment; the electrical substation for supply of the drinking water was cut off, and the village left out of water completely. Gradually people began to leave the village, there was a general outflow of population, while those who stayed survived as they could, felt abandoned and neglected by the government.

Working as the neighborhood volunteer, Larisa Ivanovna experienced people's lack of understanding and indifference to common problems, when they said that all problems were a headache of the authorities and the government. But at the same time, there was no trust in the government, there was any faith in the future. Sometimes people themselves began to take out the garbage, dig the irrigation ditches, and clean the public places. In 2015, Boroldoi AA became the Project's target municipality, where our hero began to actively participate in the organization of public events as a member of the Initiative Group (IG) and chairperson of the Joint

Monitoring and Evaluation Group (JM&EG).

“I was not happy with the work of our aiyl okmotu and criticized them constantly. After working closely with the Project, I began to understand how difficult it is for the LSG body to address all problems of the village with such a small budget - 4 million 753 thousand soms. Gradually getting involved in the project implementation process, I began to understand the budget and understand accounting, began to see mistakes, what is being executed and what is not, figured out the entire structure of the LSG body - who is responsible for what, the role of AK and AO deputies. Working with the population, I gained a lot of experience in organization of various events like gatherings, public hearings (PH), learned how to engage people in solving a problem, learned to prepare presentations and speak to people. Most importantly, I understood and firmly believe that local authorities and local community constitute one whole organism that should develop together with the help of each other, that each person is responsible for the entire village. Trust is important that we helped to restore it working with the Project, establishing a dialogue, helping the LSG bodies be more transparent and

accountable. Working closely with young people in this Project, I realized that we need to speak up, have own voice, and only jointly we can resolve many problems in the village."

So, all together came to one opinion - need own leader in the local self-government to promote general ideas on top, so the village youth asked Larisa Ivanovna to nominate her candidacy to the deputy of AK. As a result, in the elections she took 6th place out of 16 candidates with 86 votes from the residents. According to Larisa Ivanovna herself, after the victory the first thing she felt was the fear for such responsibility, but realizing that the people supported and entrusted, she firmly said: "So, we will work and raise up the village." The first thing the new deputy of AK mentioned about was the need to study the legislation on LSG, to understand all the regulatory acts in order to make the right decisions. In her opinion, the process of decision-making is a very crucial moment, which the future of every villager depends on: "I want to bring back at least some of the past glory and prosperity of our village, when all residents live in prosperity, no one will leave, everyone will have a job, when every resident will take a good care of their village."

The active participant of many trainings, deputy Larisa Ivanovna knew that any villager can attend the session of AK, and now she focuses on the transparency of the AK deputies' activities notifying the population in advance about the forthcoming sessions of AK. Now at AA sessions there are always 3 to 12 residents of AA from, and after the session she posts all the decisions and resolutions of AK on the information boards; actively participate in the work of AO in organizing and conducting gatherings and public hearings, supervises timely updates on the information boards of AO.

Also, the new deputy did not like the distribution of the budget earlier, and now, as the deputy she studies the budgetary materials more in detail and actively participates in the discussions at the budgetary public hearings and at the AK sessions tries to review all the proposals received from the population.

An important work for the AK deputy according to Larisa is a care of elderly people: "All the pensioners who gave their whole lives for the development of their native village must feel that society needs them and they were not forgotten, they need simple attention. This attention is not only giving one-time things like groceries, but also to involve all the old people in society without exception, to surround them with care so that they do not feel abandoned."

Speaking about the effectiveness of the AK deputies' work given all the new knowledge and experience, mistakes of the previous deputies, Larisa Ivanovna made a number of proposals. First, she invited her colleagues to start their work with discipline, and today all sessions of AK begin on time. Secondly, current AK deputies do not work only with papers, but often walk in the streets and meet with residents, communicate and learn more about the problems in the village, and needs of the population; try to respond quickly to every signal and protect their interests. In addition, AK deputies now work as a team and permanent commissions really started to function, which was not the case before. According to our hero, today the solidarity of the deputies with the executive body of AO is very pleasing; there is a mutual understanding that is important for achieving a common goal. All this gave real results. For example, for a long time the urgent problem of garbage in the village was not addressed. Now the problem has been resolved - as a result of successful cooperation and

interaction between AK and AO, the issue of the solid waste collection and disposal was solved, and AO created a department of housing and communal services with 2 workers, that collect garbage once per week according to the schedule.

In 2015, Larisa Ivanovna was elected as a chairperson the joint monitoring and evaluation group (JM&EG) and knows the activities of this group from within.

"Today, this mechanism is very necessary for the development of the village, because it has an important mission - control over the quality of services provided by the local self-government. In 2016, there were lots of misunderstandings and conflicts in the monitoring and evaluation process, and then JM&EG was not taken seriously and did not reckon with it, they thought that these were simple games", the deputy said.

Now having become the AK deputy, she creates all the conditions for the robust work of the JM&EG so that they can fulfill their goals and tasks without hindrance.

Her quotation: "We will keep the bar that was taken in the framework of the project implementation, namely, on transparency and accountability of the LSG body, conduct public hearings on budget and gathering, open sessions of AK with participation of the local community, solve problems of the village with high quality, intensify the work of IG and JM&EG. We cannot afford losing the trust that won back by hard work. Only with the trust of the population, the LSG can be successful."

In the photo:
members of Joint Monitoring
and Evaluation groups.
Kusova Larisa in the center