

## Building the role of civil society to improve access to justice and to strengthen the Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic



The Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA) is working to improve the situation of vulnerable groups, including children, women, and people with disabilities. Based on the experience and achievements of the previous project "Equal before the law: access to justice in Central Asia" EFCA, in cooperation with the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and PF "Legal Clinic "Adilet" launched a new project in 2015, titled "Building the role of civil society to improve access to justice and strengthen the Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic". The project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union.

### Context

In Kyrgyzstan citizens often face social injustice. Ethnic minorities, women, youth and people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups. And while they face discrimination, they are not able to defend their rights.

In many cases, especially when it comes to people living in remote, rural areas, people have to seek help from nongovernmental organizations. However, local NGOs also lack the knowledge and skills to work effectively in order to protect and promote human rights.



### Goal and main objectives

The project aims to enhance the role of civil society to strengthen the rule of law and improve access to justice in the Kyrgyz Republic. The project will achieve its main goal by accomplishing following objectives:

- to enhance CSOs' capacity to document the violations of rights of marginalized groups, and to refer them to relevant authorities;
- to improve access to legal support for marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, youth, women and persons with disabilities;
- to strengthen awareness of the principles of the Rule of Law and to increase possibilities for advocacy.

Rule of law is a legal doctrine that all people are equal before the law. These are legal and political principles that ensure the accountability of all individuals and institutions including governments. Attitudes towards all citizens, who have committed illegal actions, should be equal. A citizen who violates the law may be subject to sanctions from the state only through a strictly-ordered procedure.

## Activities

Civil society organizations have participated in seminars and trainings in following areas: human rights protection mechanisms, human rights violations monitoring, raising legal awareness of citizens, as well as mobilization of domestic and international resources. The NGOs have learned to identify legal violations, write monitoring reports, provide initial legal consultations, and direct potential complainants to the relevant institutions.

Partner organizations act as centers, where local residents seek paralegal aid. In turn, representatives of NGOs are provided with support by a professional lawyer who answers all questions through the open online resource center [www.forum.ebl.kg](http://www.forum.ebl.kg).

In addition, civil society organizations will take part in drafting two analytical tools: an interactive platform that displays the availability of legal services at the local level, and an interactive map showing access to justice in all regions of the country.

Moreover, EFCA, with the support from civil society organizations, will conduct outreach campaigns in 16 target rayons.



## Outcomes and expected achievements

- a network of civil society organizations, which includes 44 NGOs involved in the protection of the rights of vulnerable people;
- about 100 representatives of civil society organizations have been trained on the mechanisms of human rights protection, human rights violations documenting, and funds mobilization;
- online resource centre for lawyers and CSOs to share best practices has been established;
- not less than 800 free legal consultations for vulnerable groups;
- not less than 50 clients through all appeals procedures;
- local citizens will increase their knowledge about legal rights.

*"During the two-day training, I learned how I can effectively protect the rights of the most vulnerable citizens, thanks to the the current legislation. Now I'm not just helping the villagers to defend their rights, but I am also sharing with them the knowledge to make them feel that they are protected by law."*

*Jumabek Musahodzhaev, the head of "Juma & Co." NGO, Issyk-Kul region.*

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