

Project Summary

PEACEFUL DIALOGUE IN KYRGYZSTAN
COUNTERING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

March – December 2016

>CRISP

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PEACEFUL DIALOGUE IN KYRGYZSTAN
COUNTERING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

This document is meant to give you an overview on the main activities and outcomes of the project “Peaceful Dialogue in Kyrgyzstan – Countering religious extremism”, which had been implemented between **March and December 2016 in five regions of the country.**

The project was designed to increase the **awareness of religious extremism among young people** and to give them the possibility to develop and implement preventive measures in their communities. It also brought together representatives of civil society and the public sector to strengthen the links between them and to work commonly on the prevention of religious radicalization.

The project was implemented in close cooperation between CRISP, the analytical research centre ‘Religion, Law and Policy’, the ‘Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan’ and the ‘State Agency of Youth, Sports and Physical Culture.’

We would like to express our gratitude to everybody who contribute to its success and we hope that our readers will find inspiration in the initiatives developed by our participants.



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Director of CRISP



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PEACEFUL DIALOGUE IN KYRGYZSTAN COUNTERING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

Capacity building of civil society actors

ToT

20 MULTIPLIERS

10 WORKSHOPS

Local workshops on preventing youth radicalization by the trained multipliers



200 PARTICIPANTS

ROUND TABLES

Dialogue between civil society and state representatives

7 INITIATIVES FOR PREVENTING RELIGIOUS RADICALIZATION

Forum Theater, Lectures, Workshops, Video production



800 COMMUNITY MEMBERS

50.000 PEOPLE REACHED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA



ACTIVITIES

Training of Trainers

TRAINING OF TRAINERS **ToT**

The first activity was a Training of Trainers in June 2016. During a seven-day training, 20 multipliers from the NGO sector and youth workers from the state-run youth centers were enabled to run three-day workshops on the prevention of youth radicalization. Apart from getting to know the workshop elements, the training included general facilitation skills and sessions on a conflict sensitive approach. The participants came from the five targeted regions and at the end of the training paired up to implement the local workshops in their cities.



ACTIVITIES

Local Workshops

LOCAL WORKSHOPS **WS**

From June-August the trained multipliers implemented local workshops for young people in 10 communities of Kyrgyzstan. The workshops consisted of lectures by invited experts, a simulation game on strategies how to deal with religious extremism and interactive exercises to reflect about root causes of radicalization. Building on their own analysis of root causes, the young participants developed ideas for initiatives in their communities for the prevention of radicalization and submitted them to the project team.



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

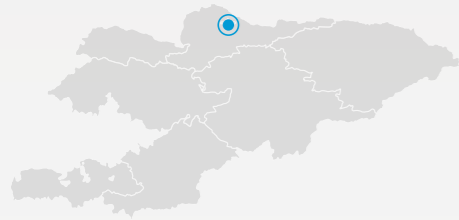
LOCAL INITIATIVES



From the 70 submitted initiative proposals, 7 were selected taking into account the relevance for the local context and the variety of methods used. The initiators received additional training, mentoring and a mini-grant for their implementation.

The initiatives were as follows:

Title	FRIENDSHIP RIBBON
Place	BISHKEK
Description	This initiative aimed at bringing young women with hijab and without together to open a space for dialogue between them. The participants had a chance to reflect about their stereotypical perceptions through personal encounters and possibilities to learn about each other views in a safe environment. This was seen as especially important in times where the public discourse on religion is becoming more and more polarized. The initiative also gained a huge public attention on social media, which resulted in an invitation of the initiators to present their project on a national TV channel.



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

Title	STOP EXTREMISM
Place	KURSHAB
Description	The initiators organized a Forum Theater Tour to 8 rural schools aimed at preventing youth involvement in violent extremism in Kurshab and Kyzyl Oktyabr Ayil Aymak. A performance told the story of a young boy who made several decisions, which brought him slowly into the trap of radical extremists. The play spectators were very active and were coming on stage to replace the protagonist character and develop other ways of behavior. One of school directors liked the event so much and asked the initiators to show it also to all parents of their students because the scene also reflected a problematic relationship between the protagonist and its parents.



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

Title	LIFE LESSON
Place	BALYKCHI
Description	The Forum Theater “Life Lesson” aimed at raising awareness on the risk of radicalization among young people. The initiative was organized for high school students of all 10 schools in Balikchy. More than 150 audience members watched a scene based on a real story of a young boy who was deceived and recruited by an extremist group. The event was supported by the city administration, the local Kenesh (council), the city Education Department, the Department of Internal Affairs, the Child Affairs Inspection and the Kazyiat (the local department of the Muftiyat).



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

Title	SAFE SCHOOL
Place	TALAS
Description	Mini lectures and interactive sessions on the topic of Violent Religious Extremism were delivered by civil society activists, experts and law enforcement agencies to 4 schools in Talas province. The initiators also showed a film about Religious Extremism and distributed a brochure with information on Kyrgyz laws against Extremism and quotations from Koran and Hadiths showing that there is no room for extremism in Islam.



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

Title **YOUTH FOR PEACE**

Place **MASSY**

Description ‘Youth for Peace’ was organized to increase awareness of youth on religious extremism. In the first part, expert inputs were given about religious extremism, laws against it and how it is dealt with in Jalal-Abad region. In the second part a Forum Theater Play was shown, in which a young girl who needed money became a victim of recruiters. The theater was used to discuss the causes of youth involvement in violent extremism and how to resolve this problem. In the final part, a drawing contest on “Religious Extremism in the Eyes of Youth” was organized. More than 200 school students and teachers from Massy and neighboring villages took part in the event.



ACTIVITIES

Local Initiatives

Title **INTERNET CAN KILL OR TEACH YOU**

Place **NOOKAT**

Description This workshop initiative aimed at preventing young people from joining extremist groups through social networks. 25 students from 2 schools in Nookat participated in the workshop. The first sessions were held on the topic “What is Religious Extremism?” and “What is Internet Recruitment?”. During the second part participants learnt about types of Internet Recruitment by radical groups and what to do in order to avoid them.



Title **WHAT IS EXTREMISM?**

Place **BISHKEK**

Description The initiators shot a short amateur film “What is extremism?”. The film producers showed how Kyrgyz youth negatively comments and reacts toward this term. They also included opinions of an expert, famous Kyrgyz journalist and the deputy mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan.



ACTIVITIES

Roundtable

ROUNDTABLE FOR STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE

To enhance the cooperation between civil society and state actors, three roundtables had been held at different stages of the project. These were attended by our project participants, representatives from various ministries (Internal Affairs, Youth and Sport), the state commission for religious affairs, GKNB and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan.

During the first round table, the trained multipliers had the chance to meet with state authorities to get to know about their approaches on countering religious extremism and to talk about the situation in their communities. The second one was dedicated to present and discuss the developed local initiatives and to see in which way, the state actors could help with its implementation. During the final one, the outcomes of the project were presented and possibilities for a future cooperation discussed. On several occasions, a cross-sector cooperation was already started, reaching from support letters from the ministries to local authorities to the provision of real-life cases of radicalization as a base for one of the forum theaters.

IMPACT

IMPACT

Impact was reached on all project levels and we would like to give a short summary of the main points. Concerning the capacity building aspect, the project contributed to the professional and personal growth of the involved youth workers. By enhancing their general facilitation skills and their competences in using simulation games as an educational tool, they increased their ability to create spaces for critical reflection among their target groups. The project was also successful in setting up a network among youth workers from different regions, which enables them to exchange best practices and to strengthen cooperation within the country. The young people involved in the workshops and local initiatives increased their understanding of religious extremism and got aware on mechanisms, which can lead to a radicalization. By this, it is assumed that it will become more difficult for recruiters to win them for radical and violent interpretations of Islam. The initiatives also increased their sense of active citizenship and made them aware about the possibility to get active themselves in addressing topics in their communities.

The open and transparent dialogue with the state actors led to an increased trust from the governmental side in civil society activities in this field. This resulted in official support for the project implementation and we were glad to see that initial cooperation between the multipliers and state agencies were also set up.



IMPACT

„I work as a teacher at the local school. Before participating in this project, I always thought that problems regarding religious extremism do not concern me. I thought that this problem is of the local authorities and people of faith. And after participating in the theological lectures and simulation game, I realized that this the problem concerns all of us. And during the game I already have ideas how to work in my own community. “

Local activist from Balykchy

“I studied how to listen to others and how to work in a group; The project showed me the way how to work on projects in future; this project helped me to study how to work with local leaders, and how to implement our initiatives. We also got chance to continue working on our initiatives in the future”.

Kelishbekova, Initator of a local initiative

„Like-minded people can build peace and a brighter future. Also, it made me think about issues of religious extremism, and helped me understand that with our knowledge and work we also can fight against religious extremism by conducting preventive-informational events“.

Alibek, facilitator



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Spiritual Administration of
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