Assessment of the capacity of providers of the state and municipal services in country areas of the Kyrgyz Republic (the analysis and recommendations)

Bishkek - 2012
The group of the developers of the report is consisting of:
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• Association «Women -The leaders of Jalal-Abad", Jalal-Abad town,
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expresses its gratitude to all the individuals who provided information for this prepared report, and will be grateful for comments and reviews about it.

GLOSSARY

AA Ayil Aimak (local government bodies)
AO Ayil Okmotu (rural council)
FDG Family doctors group
ICT Information and communication technologies
LGB Local government bodies/ Local self-government
NLF Normative legal act
NGO (NCO) Non-governmental (non-commercial) organization
Consumers Here: target group of the joint project of the EU and UN - women, youth and children
Provider Local LGB, structural subvisions and subordinate institutions of the state bodies of the Executive authorities, municipal institutions and enterprises that are responsible for the provision of the population by selected for the assessment of 7 types of services
Service Result of a provider's activities that is carried out in the framework of their competence in the execution of the request of physical and legal entities aimed at implementation of rights, satisfaction of legal interests or the fulfilment of civil and legal obligations imposed upon them by normative legal acts
FMS Feldsher-midwife station
INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the Joint project of the EU and UN: «The Promotion of good governance for social justice» the work is conducted with the 30 municipalities in 7 regions of Kyrgyzstan. The project stipulates systematic work with the different groups of interests, which should lead to the positive dynamics of the development of the local communities. Target groups - women, children and youth.

The aim of the project is to increase equitable access to the state and municipal services for vulnerable population groups (young people, women, and children) in 30 municipalities of Kyrgyzstan, through improved governance at the local and national level.

At the first stage in the communities of 30 pilot rural municipalities there was a survey conducted to identify to which of the selected services for the estimation target groups of the project have the least access.

Selected services for the estimation:
- Primary health care (including maternity care);
- Pre-school education, primary and secondary school education;
- Water: drinking and irrigation water (including the services of sanitation);
- Services related to access to land (certificates, allotment of plots, etc.);
- Services related to the development of small and medium business (licensing, registration, etc.);
- Services related to access to social security benefits;
- Administrative services provided by the municipalities (the issuance of certificates of birth, marriage registration, issuance of building permits, etc.).

The goal of the second stage, which results has prepared in the present report is the estimation of the potential of providers of state and municipal services (local government bodies, structural units and subordinate institutions of Executive power bodies, municipal institutions and enterprises). The target group of the estimation of the second phase also included non-governmental organizations that are working in communities on the basis of the state social order and/or are able to give an estimation of the potential of providers of the services provided.

The results of the second phase research was estimation of the potential of service providers, identifying the most problematic areas and existing opportunities to increase the potential of service providers, the development of recommendations for further steps aimed at consolidation of the providers potential.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

For estimation were used the following instruments:
1. Interviewing representatives of service providers - 600 people in 20 of each of the 30 municipalities (including deputies, heads and employees of LGB and subordinated institutions of Executive power bodies, providers of the above services, NGOs).
2. The analysis of the survey data obtained in the course.
3. The analysis of normative-legal documents of the national and local level and the content-analysis of the various publications that are relevant to the topic of the project.
NORMATIVE-LEGAL BASE

The providers’ potential of state and municipal services is a strategic resource for ensuring the provision of quality services to the population. Almost every institution of the state, part of which are service providers, have indication of the *increase of the capacity and qualification of the officials and employees* in the Condition.

In large measure consolidates the rules concerning the improvement of qualification and retraining of public servants. State personnel service has this direction, and one of whose objectives is the effective formation of personnel potential of the civil service and improving the management of the public service. In the sphere there are a number of regulations, policies, strategies, national programs, which contain provisions to improve the potential of staff. As an example sectoral documents can be named in the field of education and health (the Strategy of education development in the Kyrgyz Republic up to 2020, The national program of reforming the health system of the Kyrgyz Republic «Den Sooluk» in 2012 - 2016).

The work to increase the potential of the state is also carried out through the creation of the centres that influence the improvement of the quality of work of state employees. The example can be a Scientific-methodical Council of the educational issues and qualification improvement of public servants of the Kyrgyz Republic, the testing Centre.

As regards the development of potential in the provision of municipal services, at the moment the local self-government practically does not have its own normative-legal base for increase the potential of the staff. All programs in this area come from the national level (the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on increase of government and municipal employees’ potential).

Increase the staff potential of state institutions did not have the mechanisms for implementation that are consolidated in the conditions of the standards, how it is realized in the rules for public officials.

At this time also there is virtually no legal requirement, what kind of conditions of the potential increase must comply the organization, to which will be transmitted the services to outsourcing. It is not quite clear yet, how will be held this process, to whom will be equated workers of the private structures involved in the provision of services, and on what basis will be carried out estimation of potential increase.

One of the important elements of increasing the service potential of providers is the material-technical base, which must comply with certain requirements. However, as in the case of improvement of professional skill and retraining of personnel in the national legislation, there are only regulations in national legislation indicated the potential increase, but there is not the mechanism and sources of financing.
GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY, AGE, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

In the course of the survey were interviewed 600 respondents of local self-government bodies, providers of municipal and public services and civil society organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Name of the AO and district.</th>
<th>The number of population, people</th>
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Graphically, the percentage of pilot municipalities in each of the regions is as follows:

The ratio of men and women among the respondents in the course of the study was as follows:

The number of respondents aged up to 40 years amounted to 186 people, in the age of 40 till 50 years - 216 persons and older than 50 years, 198 persons.
The level of education of respondents presents the following picture: the number of respondents with higher education constituted 46.8% of those with secondary education was 14.8%. The rest of 38.4% of respondents have secondary and technical secondary education.

The experience of the research respondents are the staff of organizations providing municipal and public services from the list above, is presented in the following chart:
COMMUNICATIONS AND FEEDBACK:

The work schedule of service providers can be categorized into formal and informal.

Formal schedule refers to five-day work within the week and usually starts at 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, there were differences in working time in the secondary and elementary schools specifically in Batken, Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Chui and Osh regions.

Informal work schedule (for example, school headmasters) refers to unlimited work days and flexible working hours. For example, school headmasters have unlimited work days, and consumers in Jalal-Abad and Talas may apply at any time. Moreover, the drinking and irrigation water supply is seasonal. That is why, some respondents answered that their work schedule during the season is not standard, during the rest period – it is restricted by working hours.

Answering questions on types of feedback respondents has in mind, as a rule, ways of informing population on the provided service, which include, first of all:

1. The General Meeting of Ayil Okmotu (rural council)
2. Mobile communication;
3. Information boards and placing ads in the most visited places (schools, post office, commercial kiosks, inside the AO, clubs);
4. Personal meetings;
5. Neighborhood huddles.

None of those interviewed used hot lines, except for ambulance service.

Not all interviewed providers possess information on representatives of the target groups (women, youth and children), who had no access (or have a hampered access) to services, on their approximate number.
In some pilot AO representatives of local officials responded that «in order to improve the coverage with services among women, children and youth, providers are planning to hold a public education campaign like seminars, close collaboration with women’s councils, youth committees, establishing radio communication in the village and in the high pastures».

At the same time the staff of civil society organizations, who conducted surveys in some regions, noted that the leads of pilot AO have set their hopes and have their own expectations on interactions with the UN Development Programme.

This, without doubt, is a sort of incentive for their development, on the other hand, it represents an additional risk that without support of the donors the development in AO in general, and the sector of public and municipal services in particular, can be much slower.

The respondents identified that poverty, ignorance of rights, and remoteness of the location of the entities providing services were some of main causes of poor access to the services.

The representatives of providers assess that the efficiency and quality of services is somehow affected by the volume of applications and complaints and appeals received by the providers’ organizations.

**STRUCTURE OF PROVIDED SERVICES**

Answering the questions related to the structure of provided services, respondents agreed that the most demanded services were:

1. Primary health care (including obstetric aid care);
2. Pre-school, primary and secondary school education;
3. Administrative services provided by municipalities (Birth certificate, marriage registration, building permits, etc.);
4. Services related to the access to land titling, (certificates, the allocation of plots, etc.).
From the report of the Batken region: "... most requests for services in an average of one per month falls on primary health care (FDG), administrative services provided by the municipalities (issue of a birth certificate, marriage registration, etc.), services, related to social benefits, water (WUA - Water Users Association). In AO Dara, AO Karabak and Uchkorgon AO there was a high level of applications for primary health care and administrative services (especially AO Uchkorgon). A distinctive feature of such AO is in the fact that they more often apply on land issues and pre-school education ... "

Extract from report on Jalal-Abad region: "...90% of respondents immediately stated that 70-98% comprised women, because they decide all social issues in the family, for instance the issues connected with children, family and village infrastructure - allowances, passports, registrar offices, birth certificates, problems of disabled relatives, elder persons, etc. Only 1-2 percent of respondents stated that few women asked for help, having explained that a Deputy is a man and few women approach him for help with issues (this is Yrys AO)

From the report of the Chui region: "... a large number of service providers surveyed are turning to the AA for administrative services. Women mainly apply to educational institutions, health care institutions, public health organizations and to AO on social issues less women refer on issues, related to water supply, architecture and construction, State Register. Service ... "

5. Potable water supply, irrigation water (including sanitary services)

Consumers of the first three services were mostly women. At the same time, depending on the area, the priority of services varies according to respondents' answers

Thus, medical services have the greatest value in the countryside, education and access to land and water.

Report of the Jalal-Abad region, "... at the question how many applications are available in average per month - no one could immediately respond because they did not analyze the subject, they start to count how many people approximately come with applications per day and multiplied this figure by a number4 of days in a month. Even those services, that record visitors in special journals thought for a long time a number of applicants, because the majority of people is not recorded.

Obviously, such a set of the most important services is connected to fact that in the joint EU and UN project the women, children and young people are the target groups (consumers). If the target group consisted of men of 35, it is likely that in the first place for this group of consumers would be other services.

Methodological difficulty was observed at analysis of the answers to the question of how long requested services were received. Although medical or educational services were immediately responded to, other services like allocation of land, a license or certificate, in terms of respondents' answers ranged from "immediately" to "30 days." In Jalal-Abad region, one of the respondents said that the period of service may take up to 1 year, especially there is sale of property or auction.
The number of calls especially members of the target groups for the selected services was not clear. First, the services were very different, and it was impossible to objectively evaluate the number of calls, for example, in connection with a primary or high school education (a separate issue, what in this case can be regarded as application). Second, those providers for whose services can be taken into account theoretically, do not maintain such records/

**PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF PROVIDERS**

The main problems faced by service providers, can be divided into general and specific. **Specific problems** related to the characteristics of a given service. For example, an insufficient number of health workers, a level of teachers’ qualification problems with mobile phones at some services, the lack of specific literature or device, etc.

**Common problems** inherent to almost every municipality surveyed, included the following:

1. Poor roads and communication networks, poorly developed infrastructure and geographical remoteness of some villages, made a negative impact on the quality of service;

2. The work of service providers is not focused on clients, and functioning of a major part of service providers practically does not depend on a number of clients and on a level of client’s satisfaction with provided services.

3. Inadequate material and technical equipment support, and first of all, shortage of office equipment, other equipment and communication facilities,

4. Workers of AA lack access to references/regulations on land, and social issues;

5. Inadequate funding especially on payment for services by population,

6. Insufficient level of knowledge and skills of employees (including ignorance of modern technology, psychological instability, inability to work with clients, etc.).

7. Rights of disabled persons (the point is first of all, connected with invalids) and other restricted abilities are not observed in any of surveyed municipality. Respondents pointed out that if there is a disabled person in the village, then such person is not able to apply for service, his relatives come instead of him. Often this is due to the fact that service providers do not provide conditions for work with persons with disabilities (ramps, wide doorways, etc.)

As for children with disabilities and needs, often in rural schools there are no conditions for their training and professionals who know how to work with children with special needs. Most often, these situations are resolved definition of a child in a specialized boarding;
8. We should underline separately, that respondents repeatedly voiced the problem of lack of specialized literature in the Kyrgyz language. This is especially noticeable on the responses of Osh and Talas regions;

Almost all of the surveyed municipalities agreed that three basic needs were:

1. Training and capacity building. Most of the respondents as the most preferred form of learning called seminars and training sessions on customer service, construction, communications and effective collaboration.

   Among the training needs, which services providers in villages require most of all were:
   - Basic directions of State Policies specifically in the sphere of services;
   - Psychological stability of employees;
   - Basic Communication Skills
   - Training on Gender Problems

2. Upgrading of technical equipment and infrastructural support;


In addition to requests to help to build the material and technical basis, the respondents indicated that they did not have the literature, containing both basic materials, and changes in legislation and procedures of services. It would also be appropriate to provide municipalities with access to a database to provide services.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION (for the Project Donors)

1. The survey results revealed that none of the services is provided in any of the selected pilot municipalities at a high level without the needs for an additional training for persons responsible for such service. Thus, there is a need for increasing capacity.

2. The services chosen for a review are various that the comparative analysis on them on many parameters is impossible. For instance, the infrastructure and conditions for land allocation cannot be compared with the way medical facilities and preschool institutions operate. Therefore, it should be understood that different kinds of potential service providers require different requirements for capacity increase.

3. The respondents noted in all pilot AO the problem of a lack of education and skills with the providers. Thus, the main need of the organizations, responsible for the providing of services, is in receiving additional training.

4. The respondents have noted that all pilot municipalities truly lack educational and skills of the providers. Thus, the main need of the organizations responsible for provision of the selected services is in obtaining additional knowledge. The Interviewees noted that many employees in the organizations responsible for the provision of services did not think that their work quality needs improvements. This is another evidence of the need to
increase the potential for providers, first of all in present of the improvement of communications and customer feedback.

5. A majority of representatives of the municipalities who participated in the survey noted about the absence of the Internet connections or that it is underused. Modern technologies, especially Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are priorities for the national development. Therefore, the widespread transition to electronic services and the introduction of communication technologies are to be implemented in the near future even if this does not seem to be paramount for the providers.

6. Almost all the respondents in the pilot municipalities have noted that the provider representatives failed to name an exact number of residents who contacted them per week/day/month. Most of them assessed their work quality according to the number of complaints from people. This confirms that record keeping is not conducted. It is recommended to introduce a system of customer feedback that could easily validate service quality with a feedback mechanism in place, which will in the future increase the level of services.

7. Moreover, there was a tendency to use "the institution of elders" (court of the elders) for resolution of conflicts arising from dissatisfaction. Of the providers with the quality of services until the quality of public sector services becomes nation-wide it is still necessary to continue using the traditional authority of the elders as a tool for conflict resolution, and stimulation of the providers in the field to increase the quality of their work.

8. Likewise, in the spirit of democracy and human development, the programmer donors should also reach out to people with special needs and persons with disabilities. It is clear that assessments are vital in inviting donors to address the rightful beneficiaries.

9. It is obvious that the services selected by the donors in pilot municipalities are the most significant for the consumers. This is particularly important with the account of the social and demographic situation in the rural area in the Kyrgyz Republic, where as a result of a migration the majority of the consumers are women, youth and children. From this point of view various project activities should continue for improvement of access for the selected target populations at all, in particular the rural population to the public and municipal services.

Thus, it is recommended to increase the potential of the providers in in the Provision of the public and municipal services:

**Educational and advisory activities**

a) Conduct training in the main directions of the Public policy in the sphere of services, psychological resistance of the employees of the Providers; communication skills; and gender issue and disabled persons problems.

b) Provide for an opportunity for the providers to receive distance consultation;
c) Each municipality should have agents (development agents), who would help the employees of the provider-organizations to obtain the necessary information, provide consultations, help to facilitate conflict situations arising on the issue of dissatisfaction with the quality of the services provided or due to difficulties with the provision of services.

Infrastructure support

a) Strengthen material-technical base of providers. First, this concerns access to the legal base. Because it is impossible to physically fill in the libraries of each provider organization in each village of each municipality, it is recommended to create an electronic library. This library should accumulate both legal regulations and information and analytical materials. If it is impossible, a base of study materials should be create and aces provided for both providers of services and village residents.

b) A second step is to create an effect from the use of such a library. This means supply of access to the Internet for Municipalities. To date, its resource is inaccessible in most of the interviewed AO. Provision of access to the network for pilot municipalities in general and to data bases in particular will have a prolonged effect for increasing the potential for the service providers.

c) It is necessary to provide support in the meeting the needs of persons with special needs. Specifically, financing of construction of rams, expansion of doorways, provision of wheel chairs for municipalities and other necessary auxiliary equipment. Help educational and health institutions acquire an least a minimal set of appliances which disable children and their parents could use in order for them not to feel more vulnerable.

d) Considering that women are the main beneficiaries of services in rural areas – special and enabling conditions should be created for them that could improve the situation from the point of view of the gender aspect.

Information and communication activities:

a) Install and regularly update information boards in the provider organizations as the main way to inform citizens presently.

b) Conduct regular trainings for employees in provider –organizations in order to improve their communicative skills and teach how to act in non-standards situations and conflict situations.

c) Introduce a system of monitoring of the quality of services and stimulate employees for increasing this quality.

d) Establish customer feedback mechanisms to assess quality/customer satisfaction/delight and employee self-esteem.