

***TFESSD Social Window Review of Progress of Funded Activities Criteria for FY03  
Evaluation  
(April 2003)***

**Task Manager and Unit:** Gulnara Febres, WBIPR

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**Activity Name:** *Capacity Building Network for Community Empowerment (now referred to as the Community Empowerment Network, or CEN)*

**Report Period:** *August 2002- April 2003*

### **1. Implementation Progress**

The implementation of the project started in December 2002, after the MoUs and Activity Agreements were signed with the selected partner institutions in the four countries covered by the project (Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan). The aim of this project is to build national networks for capacity building in community empowerment/community driven-development approaches in and between these target countries. An Identification Mission was undertaken in August 28 – September 15, 2002 with the primary purpose of identifying and interviewing potential candidates for the role of National Network Coordinator (local partner) in each of the four targeted countries. This Mission also included a general assessment of demand for the Network among potential members, identifying key themes which would likely be the focus of attention in each country. Agreement was also reached on Focal Points within each Resident Mission which would work with selected partners to ensure that the Network is implemented effectively and that it serves the Bank's operational needs. During this mission, 3-4 groups in each country were interviewed, presented to the project objectives, and asked to submit Concept Notes for consideration (Mission summary available upon request).

Strong Concept Notes (average of 2-3 per country) were received from international and local NGOs in response to the call for proposals, each of which were carefully reviewed jointly by WBI, the Social Development Unit of the Europe and Central Asia Region at the World Bank (WB ECSSD), and Resident Missions focal points. The following organizations were selected to act as National Network Coordinators/WB partners for CEN project: (Justification for selection of partners is available upon request)

1. Counterpart Sheriktesh, Kyrgyz Republic
2. Counterpart Tajikistan, Tajikistan
3. Save the Children, Azerbaijan
4. Business Women's Association, Uzbekistan.

On December 14, 2002, the project was officially launched during the first CEN meeting, which took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan. At the meeting, participants included the National Network Coordinators, World Bank Resident Mission Focal Points for country, and representatives of UNDP and WBI. The goal of this meeting was to clarify and agree on the overall framework of the Network. Key issues discussed at the meeting were: the role of the national steering groups, action plans, CDD project mapping, regional networking, the target audience and the coverage. (The meeting agenda and the list of participants are available upon request)

We have also established a strong partnership between WBI and UNDP which is outlined in a Cooperative Framework Agreement which will soon be signed both organizations. UNDP is contributing to CEN's success by coordinating its work on CDD with CEN activities, by being a full member of the Steering Group and working together with local partners, financing some of CEN partners' initiatives, and contributing to situational analysis through its local offices in each of the countries. (Copies of the Cooperative Framework Agreement; description of UNDP TOR for Situational Analysis and Guiding Content are available upon request)

In order to ensure that there is optimal synergy between UNDP and WB efforts on CDD, all CEN partner organizations were invited to UNDP's Initial Planning Meeting for the Central Asia and Caucasus Project on Strengthening CBO Capacity to Empower Communities for more effective participation in PRS at local and national levels, which was held on January 17-18 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. (The agenda of the event is available upon request). As a result of this, it was agreed that the Steering Groups for each national CEN would include a representative of UNDP's Country Office, the CEN partners would participate in the UNDP-led Situational Analysis and a uniform approach to CDD project mapping would be used.

The National CENs started to design and implement their National Action Plans in January, 2003. In each of the countries, multi-stakeholder **Steering Groups were formed** consisting of representatives from donor organizations, international (umbrella NGOs), local NGOs, CBOs, PRSP and CDF Secretariats (Central government representatives), local government, and private sector. On average, each Steering Group consists of 15 members. SG's responsibilities include: to approve the annual Action Plan as prepared by the local partner organization in consultation with Network members, budget allocations for the implementation of the Action Plans; design its own governance structure and procedures; define benchmarks for progress and impact indicators; help reach out to participants for future program activities among their peers; help to disseminate information about the Network among its relevant constituencies. All of the Steering Groups have established their procedures, meet regularly and conduct efficient monitoring of their respective national Networks. In Azerbaijan, in addition to the voting members of the SG, they have selected a second group of honorary members whose input is considered valuable. (The lists of the SG members in each country are available upon request)

A considerable amount of work has already been accomplished, all country Networks are up-to speed with their implementation plans. The minutes of the meetings of the Steering Groups and Regular Network meetings reflect the participatory and transparent manner of the decision making process.

In each of the countries, the partners have started a **stock-taking/mapping exercise** in order to analyze and map the existing community empowerment initiatives, institutions, trainers, donors, available materials and Networks, and developed detailed questionnaires for collecting such an information, which will be incorporated into the databases. Databases created by them will become available to other organizations through Web-based platforms (so that the updates might be done by the organizations themselves). Some of the countries have already started providing training and organizing conferences for NGOs, CBOs, local government and donor representatives to share the results of the situational analysis and mapping exercises, and involve more stakeholders in the initiative. **In Uzbekistan**, for example, CEN partner is training facilitators from 8 regions of the country in facilitation skills and participatory community appraisal. Trained facilitators will then select 2 local communities (mahalla) in their regions and establish initiative groups to help these communities to achieve tangible results with their projects.

All the partners have proven to be very proactive and innovative in their approaches. **In Tajikistan**, the partner jointly with the Center for Civic Initiatives is developing a manual on traditional forms of communities in Tajikistan to assist various organizations working with communities to better understand the specifics of the Tajik communities. The manual will include such topics as: Society and Community, and their Interpretation in Tajikistan, The Main Forms of Communities in Tajikistan, Traditions and Law in Communities, and The Traditional Institutions of Power and Leadership in Tajik Communities.

**In Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic**, Counterpart Consortium is utilizing the capacity of its Civil Society Support Centers (CSSC) in implementing the project. Each Center had been given a task to prepare and make a presentation on the community development activities and the situation with CBOs/ community groups in their respective regions. All the CSSCs expressed interest in participating in the project. This ensures a strong capacity for the CEN project as the Centers have conducted similar projects and have a lot of experience in communities' outreach. It also bodes well for the sustainability of the CEN if it is considered to be valuable by such a range of local organizations.

CEN partners have started public awareness campaigns by issuing bulletins, newsletters (in two or three local languages, to be disseminated among the communities), using their existing websites for distributing

information on the network widely, organizing round table discussions, Donor Forums, local government training workshops, national CDD conferences.

**In Azerbaijan**, Save the Children has contracted a local NGO to implement the mapping exercise while they provide oversight. In fact, they will be subcontracting with other local organizations to implement most of the Action Plan activities for this fiscal year which will allow them to support and build the capacity of local NGOs and enables them to implement many more projects simultaneously. The partner in Azerbaijan has proven to be very entrepreneurial, and they have already identified additional funding for the CEN from a private donor who has expressed an interest in matching the World Bank contribution.

To keep the momentum going, to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between CEN partners and the experts from different organizations, we have established a **CEN e-mail list**, where all of the Network members can address important issues, share knowledge, resources, and get answers to their questions. In addition, **Regional Video-Conferences are being held every month**, where CEN national partners report on the progress made, propose their suggestions on the future steps, hear interesting presentations from the invited guests on similar initiatives and identify synergies between their projects. To date, we have held two Regional VCs (in February and in March, 2003).

Full National Actions Plans and detailed progress reports from each of the national networks are available upon request. Such details will also be available shortly on the project website at: <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/attackingpoverty/eca/cenhome.html>

## **2. Disbursement Progress**

We disbursed the first tranche of funds to each partner organization (\$13,500 x 4 = \$54,000) back in December 2002. The second payment to the partners will be disbursed by April 10, 2003. (\$18,000 x 4 = \$72,000), which will bring CEN national activity expenses to \$54,000 + \$72,000 = \$126,000

We are also planning to hold a Regional Workshop on May 21-24, 2003 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, where we plan to utilize the rest of the allocated funds (\$50,000). The total grant amount is \$175,000, and it will be completely spent by the end of this FY. Matching funds are also being provided by WBI, ECSSD, Swiss and Japanese Trust Funds.

## **3. Continued Operational Relevance**

The CEN project started as a joint initiative with ECSSD. We are in a constant process of consultations with ECSSD colleagues and coordinate decisions with their recommendations, knowledge of the CDD process in the Region, and their extensive studies on CDD. Colleagues from Operations constantly meet CEN partners whenever they travel to the Region, and contributed significantly to the selection of partners. They are also active participants of CEN Regional VCs and Regional Workshops. We use the networks they have created during the past several years to strengthen the project.

Recently approved Country assistance Strategy (CAS) for Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic Country Assistance Strategy Upstream are also linked to the project. It is mentioned in the Tajikistan CAS that the newly launched **WBI Capacity Enhancement Needs Assessment (CENA)** will focus on CDD. Some WB projects, such as Education Modernization Project in Tajikistan, involve CEN partners. In addition, Annex 14 of the Project Appraisal document refers to community-driven initiatives through small grants for Parent-Teachers Associations and mentions the CEN project.

CEN partners work closely with the WB Resident Mission focal points who guide and advise them on possible ways of coordination with the Bank's projects. For example, in Azerbaijan, Save the Children is exploring to submit proposals for the WB's Small Grants program; as well as with the Parliament/PRSP team to develop a grant to the PRSP Capacity Building Trust Fund (that would educate members of government about PRSP and community-driven development). Save the Children is considering to connect

to the WB CDD program, and might get involved in the Country Assistance Strategy which will also be doing a needs assessment on community involvement.

We are active participants in **ECA CDD Working Group of the WB**, and all the members of this group are aware of the CEN project. ECSSD colleagues are members of the CEN email distribution list, where they can witness day-to-day progress, express their views, contribute to discussions, and disseminate any papers/materials they find useful. CEN partner organizations already are disseminating the findings of the WB recent studies and making use of them during their training events, such as “Up-scaling the CDD in Central Asia”; “Fostering Community Driven Development, What Role for the State”, etc., and raising the awareness on the existing WB CDD small grants projects.

Jointly with the ECA Region we are organizing the so called **Country Innovation Day (CID)** (May 21, 2003) and the **Knowledge Forum** (May 22, 2003), followed by the CEN Annual Workshop (May 23, 2003) in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Country Innovation Day (CID) is a "mini marketplace" (based on the World Bank's global *Development Marketplace* program) for innovation ideas that address local development challenges. CID will consist of a competitive, juried process that awards small grants to social innovators. More than 100 CBOs will present their projects and "sell" their ideas to potential donors who can provide financial support; and the best projects will be awarded by the small grants (up to \$20,000).

The Knowledge Forum is an integral component of the CID and will provide learning benefit to all of the participating competitors as well as CEN members, as well as provide a space for various Central Asian CS representatives and other development counterparts to share their individual and institutional perspectives, based on their efforts to empower communities within their respective countries. It is a one-day forum that will consist of a few interactive sessions on the themes consistent with the overall theme of the CID, Community Driven Development. We are planning to invite representatives of the WB small grants program to the event, to use CEN network colleagues as speakers and facilitators for the sessions, and to design the whole event in close collaboration with ECSSD colleagues.

#### Link to PRSPs

- Steering Groups in Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Azerbaijan include PRSP Secretariat members to ensure the connection of the CEN project to the national PRS.
- All the project partners were invited to the WB 3<sup>rd</sup> PRSP Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan, December 11-13, 2002, and to the Development Debates (policy dialogue on poverty reduction strategies) in September-October, 2002.
- Tajik and Kyrgyz teams are conducting jointly with the WBI a Regional Course on Monitoring and Evaluation of PRSP by Civil Society in Bishkek, June 16-21, 2003.

#### **4. Spillover Effects**

The project emphasizes strengthening the importance of CDD approaches in the PRSP context. In this regard, we are including a CDD component into each of the WBI training events that we are developing. For example, we organized :

- one session on Community Empowerment at the WB 3<sup>rd</sup> CIS-7 PRSP Forum, Almaty, December 11-13, 2002. More than 250 participants participated at this Forum. (The agenda and the list of participants of this event are available upon request)
- CEN partner organizations were invited to the Development Debates in October and November, 2002, organized within the WBI Attacking Poverty Program (APP), which are policy dialogues of key decision-making stakeholders in these countries. All the countries were connected by DL between each other and the World Bank experts from the WB/HQ ECA Region.

- WBI and CEN partners are organizing a Regional Course on Monitoring and Evaluation of PRSP by Civil Society for Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Within the project, we are organizing a Regional Workshop on CDD (CID and the Knowledge Forum) in May 21-23, 2003 in Bishkek, KR, and are bringing to the event more than 100 CBOs; CEN Network members, government officials, media representatives and the potential donors who will subsequently finance the projects-winners.
- CEN partners organize multi-stakeholder Forums, and, as it was mentioned above, all the Steering Groups represent wide spectrum of important actors.

PRSP team members from the central government have agreed to serve as SG members in 3 countries, which reflects the level of trust to the Network and associated partner organizations. By including influential leaders from the national PRSP teams into the project we are ensuring the engagement of civil society and, in particular, CBOs, into the PRSP design, monitoring and implementation in these countries. By bringing these multiple constituency groups that under regular circumstances never meet together in one room, we facilitate the dialogue between and establish their partnerships.

By participating in ECA CDD Working Group, we are contributing to the capacity building component of strategy for Scaling-up CDD in Central Asia.

By working very closely with UNDP, we are establishing the links between CEN partners and the donor for future cooperation, and taking benefit of the UNDP projects and capacity building efforts in the target countries. In day-to-day communications and Video Conferencing Sessions we constantly facilitate interactions between CEN members, who are mostly practitioners, with the state-of-the-art experts and researchers (for example, experts from the London School of Economics; their peers from international NGOs (INTRAC), Aga Khan Foundation, other donors, etc. who are often invited to VCs to speak and share their expertise)

Publications and databases that are created for the CEN Network are reaching out and benefiting most of the communities in remote areas of all four countries, bringing knowledge on the project and CDD issues to the public. Databases are open for use of all interested donors, NGOs and CBOs and is a good tool for information sharing.

## **5. Sustainability of Interventions**

In the MOUs signed, all of the partners were explicitly asked to contribute to the project with resources raised by them independently and all of them are providing in-kind and/or cash contributions.

By building on what exists in the countries – for example, the networks of Counterpart Consortium, Business Women’s Association, Save the Children, UNDP, we are ensuring more feasible sustainability of CEN partners, who will continue their activities even after the donor financing is withdrawn.

By constantly training CEN partners and their clients (CBOs), by promoting their interactions with key actors involved into the decision-making process, policy dialogues (like Development Debates, PRSP Forums, etc), we are building a sustainable and strong network, focused on empowerment of communities and the poor.

We are planning to help them to develop a set of tangible indicators to assess capacity building within their own training activities through the WBI Capacity Enhancement Needs Assessment (CENA)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The objective of the CENA exercise is to come up with indicators for evaluation of the capacity building efforts and the first pilot country in ECA is Tajikistan.