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**NEWS** | May 14, 2012 | Kyrgyzstan | Rehabilitation

## REACH mapping tool improves local governance



ACTED Kyrgyzstan has been developing an innovative online mapping system known as REACH. REACH has now been developed into an offline version to be used to support local government actors with access to statistical information for improved budgeting, planning and policy making processes. Through better access to information, the local governments are better able to serve the needs of their communities.

ACTED has been working on expanding the accessibility of the REACH socio-economic mapping platform as a planning tool for local government districts, with support from USAID. This mapping tool includes over 100 social and economic indicators across 241 municipalities of southern Kyrgyzstan.

### Bringing key stakeholders of local governance together

Rahima, from the Tash-Bulak municipality of Jalal-Abad region has firmly decided to join a working group with 20 members from key stakeholders of local governance. "To tell you the truth, I got very excited to get to know more about the map... We rarely use even geographic maps... and maps with collection of various statistical information was something ground-breaking for me" – said Rahima. This project was unique in brining key stakeholders of local governance, i.e. representatives of local authorities together to address community needs.

Members of the working groups were trained throughout one day on how to use the offline mapping tool. Rahima shared with the project team: "Once I needed statistical information on pastures of neighboring municipalities and instead of calling relevant people I just used the mapping tool". ACTED provided each of the local governments with a desktop computer as well as an offline version of the tool. Now Rahima even thinks how to save some money and buy a new computer to have this mapping program at home.





Rahima was eager to learn new things in budgeting as she has been working in this field for more than five years, and to learn the essentials of planning and local governance. The sessions enabled her and the other participants to learn more about how to use computers, as well as how to navigate the significant amount of data packed into the REACH maps.

**Identifying community needs to advocate for local solutions**

The last day of the training on best governance practices, devoted to project development was exciting for all training participants as they had a chance to prioritize community needs and develop in total 13 concept notes to respond to those challenges. Beneficiaries of the project will surely continue using the offline mapping tool to analyze the issues in the community and justify existing problems with statistical information and advocate for locally relevant and acceptable solutions. Through the use of REACH, the process for prioritizing, planning and investing government monies into programs to support the communities have become easier and more transparent.

Four municipalities in Jalal-Abad and Osh provinces of Southern Kyrgyzstan were the first to utilize the offline version of the mapping tool translated into Kyrgyz and Russian. The offline version, a DVD that contains maps and significant amounts of information, is being used to improve governance processes such as budget management, planning, and transparency.

**Liens:**

- The REACH initiative
- REACH initiative Kyrgyzstan in English
- REACH initiative Kyrgyzstan in Russian

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