



UKUK BULAGY (Rule of Law)

OVERVIEW

USAID's *Ukuk Bulagy* project works to improve legal services; strengthen connections between the judiciary and society; and support a more transparent, accountable, and efficient judiciary.

Ukuk Bulagy employs a people-centered justice approach, using data to better understand people's justice needs, providing inclusive services in response to these needs, and empowering legal service providers to address recurring legal problems. Support will enhance collaboration between the justice system and the public, optimize quality and efficiency of justice and legal services, and strengthen open and accountable governance as well as judicial independence and self-governance.

KEY RESULTS

Increasing Access to People-Centered Justice and Legal Literacy *Ukuk Bulagy* is focusing its 2023-2024 support on justice needs of the people in three pilot rayons (districts), Nookat (Osh oblast), Ton (Issy Kul oblast), and Sverdlovsk (Chui oblast) following a 2022 survey



conducted in cooperation with the Presidential Administration. With support from *Ukuk Bulagy*, community leaders in the pilot rayons formed 'justice groups' to identify community priorities on local legal service improvements and develop activities. *Ukuk Bulagy* issued legal literacy grants to diverse civil society organizations targeting women, girls, and other marginalized groups to promote collaboration among local governments, communities, and CSOs. As part of the 16-day Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, *Ukuk Bulagy* provided guest lectures for 415 students. *Ukuk Bulagy* is also supporting the Ministry of Justice's legal education programs for school clubs; as well as training and internships for mediators, paralegals and students, providing primary legal aid and referrals.

Strengthening Institutions for Transparency and Accountability *Ukuk Bulagy* actively supports both national and local government institutions to improve public access to services and information. It provides expert assistance including recommendations to improve legal data management and legal services delivery. It also supports centralized data management, storage and open access to judicial decisions, and the use of audio-video transcriptions and electronic documents within the court system, to improve transparency and accountability. The activity supported the judiciary in the development of the National Targeted Program "Development of the Justice System of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2023-2026" by providing experts and supporting public discussions. Additionally, it supported the Association of Judges to advance ethical and professional behavior of all legal professionals. It also consistently supports the continuous learning and professional development of all legal service providers to ensure accessible justice for citizens. Over the last two years, more than 500 judges, prosecutors, lawyers, bailiffs, and legal aid providers, (including 200 plus women), participated in professional development programs conducted in collaboration with the Supreme School of Justice, Prosecutor's Office training centers, Bar Association, and other educational institutions.

Promoting Gender-Inclusive and Responsive Justice *Ukuk Bulagy* addresses gender gaps and barriers that prevent vulnerable groups such as youth, persons with disabilities and others from accessing judicial services. The activity partnered with the judiciary and the Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges to research the barriers for women and ethnic minorities entering the judiciary and supported a study on the role that *aksakal* courts (courts of elderly) play in resolving women's legal issues. These studies formed the basis to encourage more women to participate in activities providing equitable legal services, helping sensitize *aksakal* courts to women's needs, and helped to combat gender-based violence. *Ukuk Bulagy* funded the Association of Legal Clinics' "Girls in Law" project to establish a Center for Development of Young Lawyers, helping women obtain skills needed to become efficient legal service providers. It is also helping universities to encourage law students to be skilled appropriately to respond to justice needs, and to explore practical ways to react to society's priority legal needs.

Project Duration: July 2021 – July 2026

Budget: \$10 million

Implementing Partner: East-West Management Institute (EWMI)

Key Partners: The Presidential Administration, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the Council on Justice Matters, the Council of Judges, the Supreme School of Justice, the Ministry of Justice, civil society organizations, lawyers, legal clinics, and academic institutions

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