



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

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**NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN AGA KHAN FOUNDATION AND THE WORLD
BANK LAUNCHES PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL COHESION
IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

WASHINGTON, DC, JANUARY 17, 2014 – The [Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.](#) (AKF USA) and the [World Bank](#) have inaugurated a program to identify factors and strengthen social cohesion in the Kyrgyz Republic and pilot new social and infrastructure approaches for studying the elements and enabling factors for civil society. The strong coalition of implementing and research partners also includes the Aga Khan Foundation (Kyrgyzstan), the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme, the University of Central Asia, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The agreement for the **Social Cohesion through Community-based Development Project**, with \$1 million from AKF USA, leverages \$2 million in funding from the World Bank's State and Peace-building Fund (SPF). This project will blend research on the factors that foster social cohesion with development activities, based on the Foundation's broad and established community-level experience in both Kyrgyzstan and greater Central Asia.

The Kyrgyz Republic is one of the poorest countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. Despite some success in fostering open institutions, the country has struggled to achieve lasting democracy and civic freedom. In June 2010, simmering political and social tensions climaxed in violent inter-ethnic clashes in the south of the country resulting in notable deaths, injuries, and internal displacement. Destruction of public and private property occurred, and loss of public confidence has hindered the recovery and development of the region. Recognizing the rich experience of many non-governmental organizations involved in the region, this project partnership aims to advance the research and analysis that has impact within the current context.

The project consists of two complementary and linked components: an identification research, evaluative and capacity development component and an intervention component. The project will aim to deliver interventions benefiting local communities along with maintaining the methodological rigor needed to achieve robust understanding of how social cohesion objectives can be most effectively integrated into community-driven development. Activities in the diverse populations of Osh province and the more homogeneous Naryn province offer different conditions for exploring these dynamics. Altogether about 6,000 people are expected to benefit directly, and nearly 75,000 people indirectly.

An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

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About Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

AKF USA, established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, not-for-profit international development organization committed to alleviating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and poor health. AKF USA works to address the root causes of poverty by supporting and sharing innovative solutions in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society, and the environment. AKF USA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code.

AKF USA is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (www.akdn.org), a network of private, non-denominational, development agencies around the world, established by His Highness the Aga Khan to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, improve living conditions and opportunities. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion and its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

About the World Bank's State and Peace-Building Fund

The multi-donor State- and Peace-Building Fund (SPF) was created by the World Bank in 2008, and supports measures to improve governance, institutional performance, and reconstruction and development in countries emerging from, in, or at risk of sliding into crisis or arrears.

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