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# Annual Report

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2025



# ***Annual Report***

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**2025**

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# About Central Asia Solidarity Groups

Central Asia Solidarity Groups (CAG) is a politically and religiously independent non-profit organization based in Malmö, Sweden. Our mission is to promote a democratic Central Asia, with a strong, active and inclusive civil society, ensuring that human rights are protected and social justice is achieved. We seek to accomplish these goals through long-term solidarity work and partnerships, training sessions, exchange programs, and advocacy efforts in the thematic areas of:

- 1. Climate and Environment**
- 2. Gender Equality and Women's Rights**
- 3. Democratic Youth Organizing**
- 4. Security and Resilience**

Our geographical focus is on Central Asia, a region comprising the five republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In addition to our work in Central Asia, we run several projects in Sweden and support civil society organizations, implementing projects linked to Central Asia in Russia.

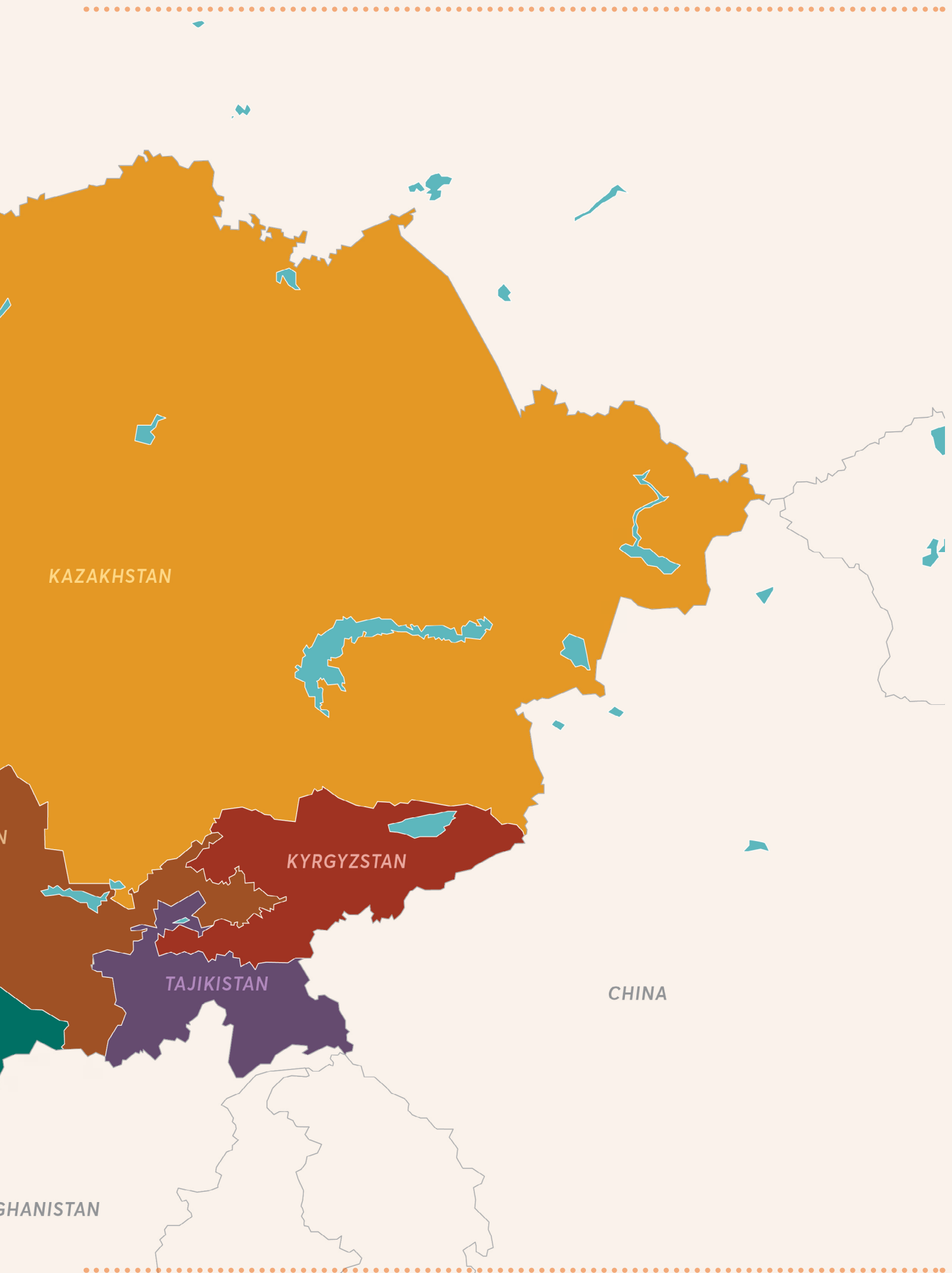
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# Central Asia





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# Management

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## The Board 2025

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In 2025, the board held six formal meetings and smaller working groups within the board supported the daily operations of the office. These working groups offered strategic guidance in areas such as fundraising and strategic partnership expansion.

The year marked a significant transition for the board, as we welcomed three new board members. With their new ideas and fresh perspectives, Aigerim, Charlotte, and Susanna have complemented the board's existing expertise in human rights, intersectionality, and democratic organizing.

With the global landscape for non-profits growing more challenging, the board's central mission this year has been to strengthen our resilience. We have focused on adapting to the new government priorities in Sweden that have directly impacted the Swedish development funding frameworks. To navigate these changes, the board will continue its work with diversifying our funding sources, remaining dedicated to our work with defending civic space and advancing social justice.

The board consisted of the following members in 2025:

**Lola Matmusaeva**  
Chairperson

**Tatiana Stebneva**  
Vice Chairperson

**Susanna Mäkelä**  
Secretary

**Talgat Subanaliev**  
Treasurer

**Aigerim Nurseitova**  
Board Member

**Charlotte Geib**  
Board Member

**Gustaf Sörnmo**  
Board Member

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## Organization and Office

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In 2025, Central Asia Solidarity Groups (CAG) reached the conclusion of a large, multi-year partnership cycle that had shaped the organization's work and internal structures over several years. The final year of this period was characterized by consolidation and continuity rather than expansion, bringing together experiences, partnerships, and organizational learning accumulated throughout the cycle. During the year, CAG continued to function as a platform for long-term solidarity work, while maintaining the flexibility required to adapt internal processes and priorities to evolving conditions.

Throughout 2025, CAG implemented interventions together with its long-term partner organizations, including El-Too, Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy (ISDS), Little Earth, and NeMolchi.UZ. In addition, CAG coordinated a multi-partner SIANI (Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative) project that brought together civil society actors and researchers from Sweden, Central Asia, and other contexts, creating space for cross-regional exchange and joint reflection. Together, these collaborations reflected sustained engagement with local civil society organizations and thematic continuity across the organization's work. By the end of the cycle, cooperation with partners increasingly emphasized shared responsibility, strengthened organizational capacity, and long-term ownership of results.

At the same time, 2025 required careful internal coordination and organizational adjustment. Rather than introducing new structures, emphasis was placed on ensuring continuity, safeguarding institutional knowledge, and reinforcing internal routines that supported responsible partnership management during a period of transition.

During the year, CAG focused on revising, updating, and operationalizing internal routines to ensure that responsibilities, decision-making processes, and documentation practices were clear, functional, and consistently applied. This work was informed by an external audit report, which provided a structured review of governance, financial management, and internal control systems. Based on this process, internal policies were updated, roles and procedures clarified, and existing practices related to financial oversight, project management, and accountability were further systematized.

The consolidation work in 2025 strengthened the organization's institutional capacity to manage partnerships transparently and responsibly, particularly in the context of long-term cooperation with local civil society organizations operating in complex environments. As a result of sustained efforts over several years to develop sound governance structures and accountability mechanisms, Central Asia Solidarity Groups was formally recognized as a partner organization of Sida during the year.

By the end of 2025, CAG had concluded a major partnership cycle with reinforced internal systems, clarified responsibilities, and strengthened mechanisms for oversight and documentation. These developments positioned the organization to continue its cooperation with partners in Central Asia on a stable and accountable footing, while maintaining a clear institutional framework for future work.

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# Thematic Program Areas

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## Climate and Environment

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Recent research identifies Central Asia as a critical climate change “hot spot,” where ecological disasters are projected to intensify. Deserts and arid zones already comprise 80% of the territory, and these landscapes are predicted to expand at an alarming rate in the coming years together with above-average temperature increases, chronic water shortages, and frequent extreme weather events. The dominant political discourse in Central Asia is largely focused on regional security and economic growth, ignoring the fact that this ecological crisis threatens not only human communities but also other species and ecosystems. Environmental civil society organizations are primary drivers of community-based resilience in Central Asia, using local knowledge to protect resources and help vulnerable communities adapt where state policies often fail to reach.



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## Gender Equality and Women's Rights

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Gender hierarchies and patriarchal family structures are a common pattern across all Central Asian countries. Central Asian state officials often dismiss gender equality and women's rights activists as promoters of “Westernized values” that supposedly threaten local culture, religion, and traditions. By framing equality as a foreign concept, the state silences discourses containing terms such as “gender”, “domestic violence”, and “non-discrimination”. These systemic barriers result in widespread violence against women and girls and the persistence of harmful practices like forced marriage, depriving women of their education and professional futures. Simultaneously, these oppressive societal norms dictate the lives of all genders, dismissing all opportunities that exist outside of the “traditional”, hetero-normative and family-focused ideal.



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## **Democratic Youth Organizing**

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Central Asian societies are built on hierarchical systems which strips power from civil society. Age represents one of the main hierarchies, where very limited voice is given to young people in the region, and major decisions that affect their current and future wellbeing rarely embrace their needs or perspectives. Over the last six years, authorities have intensified their crackdown on independent voices to suppress dissent. Civil society groups face heavy restrictions in the name of "law and order", and their work is increasingly stigmatized or criminalized. This trend confirms that a healthy civil society can only thrive in an environment committed to a democratic vision and without it, power remains concentrated at the top.



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## **Security and Resilience**

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The shrinking space for civil society in Central Asia is a major threat to regional peace. Without a safe and secure environment to advocate for human rights, democratic progress remains restricted and stalled. While local organizations are best positioned to address conflict, they often lack the necessary resources and training. Central Asia Solidarity Groups bridges this gap by providing partners with tools for nonviolence and support for more inclusive and democratic practices that mitigate conflict and fragmentation. Importantly, the absence of ongoing armed conflict is not an indication of peace. The threats to peace and security in the region are many and include: border conflicts, inter-ethnic clashes, the rise of nationalist rhetoric, extreme climate change, political instability, low level human development indexes, poverty, and an unequal distribution of natural resources. These threats are complex and interrelated, and vary from country to country in their intensity and manifestation.





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# Partners and Projects

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## Permaculture Communities in Naryn and Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

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*El-Too, located in Bokonbaev village of Issyk-Kul region, is dedicated to nature conservation, raising environmental awareness, and the development of ecotourism. The main goal of their activities is to conserve natural resources, adapt to climate change, and improve the economic well-being of rural areas by supporting local communities, protecting the environment, and creating additional sources of income. The work focuses on training women and youth in permaculture principles, creating micro-reserves for the preservation of flora and fauna, developing eco-tourism, introducing energy-saving technologies, environmental education of youth, increasing environmental literacy of the population, and supporting community initiatives.*



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### Background

Rural communities in the Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions face interlinked challenges related to climate change, land degradation, water scarcity, and limited economic opportunities. Dependence on livestock and monoculture farming has increased pressure on fragile ecosystems, while gaps in access to knowledge, services, and secure land use constrain communities' ability to adapt. Women and youth are particularly affected by these dynamics, as they often have fewer opportunities to participate in decision-making related to natural resource management and local development.

The intervention was designed as a multi-year initiative to respond to these structural challenges through long-term engagement with communities, recognizing that ecological restoration, livelihood diversification, and shifts in local practices require time and continuity. Since 2023, the partnership has provided a stable framework for gradual learning, adaptation, and the embedding of more sustainable approaches to land use and community resilience.

## Long-term goal of the partnership

The long-term goal of the partnership with El-Too is to support rural communities in the Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions in strengthening sustainable land use and livelihoods through the application of permaculture principles, contributing to climate change adaptation, ecosystem restoration, and biodiversity conservation, while enabling diversified and resilient sources of income, food sovereignty, and healthy, varied diets rooted in local conditions and knowledge.

## Main activities during 2025

### Permaculture practices consolidated and tested at farm level

In 2025, El-Too supported farmers in the Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions to consolidate permaculture knowledge introduced earlier in the intervention through hands-on experimentation and peer learning. Two pilot farms tested different mulching materials and rainwater harvesting systems adapted to local conditions. Farmers maintained observation journals documenting soil moisture, plant development, and crop performance, and shared findings with other community members, strengthening locally owned learning processes and practical adaptation to climate stress.



### Environmental restoration through long-term planting

As part of a continued focus on ecological restoration and sustainable livelihoods, farmers planted 650 walnut seedlings across target villages in 2025. The seedlings were purchased and planted by the farmers themselves, reinforcing ownership and linking environmental recovery to long-term economic perspectives rather than short-term outputs.



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### **Green Region: linking permaculture and sustainable tourism**

In 2025, El-Too advanced the Green Region concept, which connects permaculture-based livelihoods with eco- and agritourism. Training sessions in the Ton and Naryn districts brought together more than 60 participants to develop practical skills for hosting visitors, including registration and visibility on platforms such as Booking, Google Maps, and TripAdvisor. With support from photographers, more than 35 rural guesthouses were documented and promoted online, several of which welcomed their first visitors during the season. Eco-routes combining nature, local food production, crafts, and everyday rural life were developed in ten locations.

### **Youth engagement and intergenerational knowledge transfer**

Young people and students played an active role in 2025 by contributing to the documentation of guesthouses, mapping eco-routes, and supporting community events linked to permaculture and tourism. This involvement helped translate environmental knowledge into practice and ensured that skills and values introduced earlier in the project continued to circulate across generations.

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### **Land consultation center strengthened as a permanent resource**

The land consultation center established earlier in the project remained a key activity in 2025. During the year, it continued to provide legal advice and practical support to rural residents on land rights and documentation. The center updated its handbook to include 30 real cases reflecting recent changes in national land legislation and expanded its outreach through cooperation with journalists and informational video materials.

### **Organizational consolidation and compliance**

In 2025, El-Too strengthened its institutional capacity by revising internal procedures to comply with updated NGO legislation, developing and translating policies on procurement, anti-corruption, and gender equality, and participating in training on social entrepreneurship. These steps supported the organization's ability to manage complex, multi-component initiatives and sustain its work beyond the large, multi-year partnership (LPF, Large Partnership Funding) cycle.

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## Results 2023-2025

### **Adoption of permaculture as a durable livelihood practice**

Over the course of the intervention, permaculture shifted from an introduced approach to an embedded practice across participating communities in Naryn and Issyk-Kul. By the end of the project cycle, farmers were independently applying soil restoration techniques, crop diversification, composting, and biohumus production, with several households generating stable additional income from these practices. Permaculture gardens functioned not only as production sites but as local demonstration spaces, visited by neighbors, students, and other farmers, indicating sustained peer-to-peer transmission beyond direct project support.

### **Strengthened economic resilience through diversification**

By the end of the cycle, participating households had diversified income sources through organic production, value-added processing, participation in fairs, and emerging links to eco- and agritourism. Women in particular increased their economic agency by engaging in product branding, sales, and small-scale entrepreneurship. The integration of permaculture with tourism created new, locally rooted income opportunities that reduced reliance on environmentally harmful practices and seasonal vulnerability.



### **Improved governance and access to land rights**

Throughout 2023–2025, the land consultation center became an established and trusted mechanism for legal support. By the end of the intervention, rural residents demonstrated increased awareness of land legislation and greater confidence in engaging with state institutions. The center's services were institutionalized within EI-Too's work, contributing both to community access to justice and to the organization's own sustainability.





### ***Environmental awareness and ecosystem restoration embedded locally***

Cumulative activities led to measurable shifts in environmental awareness and practice. School-based permaculture gardens, long-term tree planting, and collaboration with beekeepers and environmental specialists contributed to soil restoration, biodiversity protection, and reduced pressure on fragile ecosystems. By the final year, sustainable land management was increasingly understood as a shared community responsibility rather than an external project-driven agenda.

### ***Institutional cooperation and policy engagement***

During 2023–2025, the organization worked actively with government agencies, which led to the allocation of budget funds by the district administration for the holding of an agro-ecological festival. Environmental initiatives were officially included in municipal socio-economic development programs, which cemented their status at the state level and ensured the sustainability of the results.

### ***Future plans***

With the conclusion of the LPF cycle in 2025, the partnership with EI-Too moves into a phase of consolidation and continuity. Experience accumulated over three years has clarified which approaches are locally embedded, institutionally sustainable, and most relevant for rural communities facing environmental and economic pressures. Building on this foundation, the partnership will continue within the framework of Sida-funded cooperation, drawing on lessons from the LPF period. Future cooperation will focus on strengthening permaculture-based livelihoods, supporting community-led environmental stewardship, and further developing organizational capacity in a changing regulatory and climatic context. Emphasis will be placed on learning, adaptation, and long-term resilience, ensuring that knowledge, practices, and participation established during the LPF cycle continue to evolve under national and regional conditions.

# Protecting Biodiversity and Encouraging Sustainable Livelihoods in Son-Kul Lake Pilot Area in the Kyrgyz Mountains



*Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy (ISDS) is a women-led civil society organization operating in Kyrgyzstan with the mission to contribute to sustainable development by applying innovative and traditional approaches to addressing environmental, social, and economic problems at the local, regional, and global levels. Since its founding in 2012, the organization has implemented a number of projects aimed at supporting local communities—with particular emphasis on women—in managing natural resources, adapting to climate change, and preserving bio-cultural diversity in Kyrgyzstan.*



## Background

The Son-Kul Lake pilot area is located in the high-altitude Kyrgyz mountains and forms part of a nationally significant wetland ecosystem used seasonally by local communities for livestock grazing. The area supports biodiversity and migratory bird habitats, while also serving as a central livelihood base for rural populations living in surrounding municipalities. At the same time, environmental pressure linked to climate variability, increasing use of pastures, and limited livelihood diversification has created long-term challenges for both ecosystems and community well-being.

The intervention responds to these structural conditions by focusing on the relationship between environmental sustainability and local livelihoods in the Son-Kul area. Primary target

groups include residents of communities surrounding the lake, with particular attention to women and youth, who are directly affected by environmental change and resource management decisions but face barriers to participation in local governance processes.

The partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy, a women-led civil society organization operating in Kyrgyzstan since 2012, is grounded in a shared understanding that meaningful environmental protection requires sustained community engagement. Structured as a three-year intervention from 2023 to 2025, the initiative was designed to allow for gradual capacity development, continuity of engagement, and the consolidation of inclusive approaches to biodiversity protection and sustainable livelihoods over time.

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## Long-term goal of the partnership

The long-term goal of the partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy is to contribute to the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources in the Son-Kul Lake area, while supporting resilient livelihoods for communities that depend on this ecosystem. The partnership seeks to strengthen inclusive local governance and community participation in environmental decision-making, with particular attention to women and youth, so that environmental protection and socio-economic well-being are mutually reinforcing and can be sustained beyond individual projects.



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## Main activities during 2025

### Community-based biodiversity education and outreach

In 2025, ISDS implemented a large-scale education and awareness effort focused on biodiversity and wetland protection in the Son-Kul Lake pilot area. Activities included school-based initiatives that engaged pupils and teachers in learning about ecosystems, biodiversity, and environmental responsibility. Educational campaigns reached schools in multiple municipalities, with students actively involved through presentations and creative work. These activities built on earlier engagement with local schools and consolidated youth participation as a visible and sustained component of the intervention in its final year.

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### Gender-responsive capacity building for sustainable livelihoods

During 2025, ISDS organized targeted training activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of local residents, particularly women, to link environmental sustainability with household livelihoods. Workshops applying the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) were conducted with participants from communities surrounding Son-Kul. The sessions focused on climate impacts on livelihoods, food security, and shared resource management, and supported participants in developing practical plans relevant to their local context. These activities deepened earlier work on inclusive participation and strengthened women's involvement in community-level planning.



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### ***Pasture and wetland stewardship through practitioner exchange***

Hands-on learning remained a core focus in 2025. ISDS facilitated the Shepherds' School, a multi-day practical event bringing together herders, farmers, tourism actors, scientists, and rangers. Participants discussed observed environmental changes in pastures and wetlands, exchanged experience on sustainable land use, and strengthened dialogue between community members and environmental specialists. This activity reinforced knowledge-sharing structures established earlier in the project and supported peer learning across sectors.

### ***Community mobilisation and public dialogue around Son-Kul***

In the final year, ISDS supported large public events that brought together community members, youth, local authorities, and environmental actors. The "Save Son-Kul: Kech-Koch" community festival served as a platform for performances, exhibitions, and discussions highlighting wetland protection and sustainable resource use. Following the festival, a peer exchange visit enabled activists, farmers, and women's council representatives from neighbouring districts to learn from each other's practices and strengthen regional connections.

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### ***Linking community action with institutional engagement***

In 2025, ISDS strengthened cooperation with state institutions and regional actors. Rangers from the State Nature Reserve participated in technical training alongside national scientists to improve biodiversity monitoring practices. ISDS also contributed to a regional workshop on wetland protection in partnership with national authorities and international actors, resulting in the adoption of a joint resolution outlining shared priorities for wetland conservation and community involvement.

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## Results 2023-2025

Over the course of the 2023–2025 intervention, the partnership with ISDS contributed to measurable and qualitative changes in how communities around Son-Kul Lake engage with biodiversity protection and sustainable resource use. By the end of the project cycle, environmental stewardship had become more visibly embedded in local practices, community dialogue, and interactions with public institutions.

### **Strengthened community awareness and engagement on biodiversity**

By the end of the cycle, environmental awareness around Son-Kul had expanded beyond small groups of activists to involve a broad cross-section of local communities. Education and outreach activities carried out over several years resulted in increased understanding of wetlands, biodiversity, and environmental pressure among schoolchildren, youth, and adults. This translated into more active participation in public events, community discussions, and locally initiated actions related to environmental protection. The scale and diversity of participation visible in the final year reflected a cumulative shift from ad hoc engagement toward sustained community interest and ownership.

### **Increased participation of women in environmental and livelihood-related decision-making**

One of the most significant outcomes of the intervention was the strengthened role of women in discussions and practices related to natural resource management and livelihoods. Over the project cycle, women's participation moved from individual involvement in trainings toward more collective and visible engagement in community planning, peer exchange, and public dialogue. By the end of the cycle, women were actively contributing to conversations linking environmental sustainability with household livelihoods and local development priorities, indicating a more inclusive dynamic in community-level decision-making processes.



### **Improved local capacity for sustainable pasture and wetland management**

The intervention contributed to enhanced local capacity to observe, discuss, and respond to environmental change. Through repeated learning formats and practitioner exchanges, community members, herders, and local actors developed a shared understanding of pressures on pastures and wetlands, including changes in vegetation, water availability, and wildlife. By the end of the cycle, these capacities were reflected not only in individual knowledge, but also in collective practices such as peer learning, dialogue with specialists, and community discussions linked to local planning processes.

## **Stronger linkages between communities and institutions**

A key result emerging over time was the strengthening of relationships between local communities, environmental professionals, and public authorities. Cooperation with rangers, scientists, and government representatives became more structured and visible toward the end of the intervention. Community perspectives gained greater recognition in discussions related to biodiversity monitoring, wetland protection, and infrastructure planning around Son-Kul. Concrete institutional responses, including the integration of environmental considerations into local planning documents and public investment decisions, reflected increased responsiveness to community-level engagement.

## **Durability of networks and regional cooperation**

By the conclusion of the project cycle, the intervention had contributed to durable networks connecting community actors across districts and linking local experience with regional dialogue. Peer exchanges and regional workshops supported shared understanding of wetland protection challenges and fostered cooperation beyond individual communities. These networks demonstrated resilience and continuity in the final year, suggesting that collaboration around biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods is likely to persist beyond the formal end of the LPF-funded intervention.

Taken together, these results indicate that the partnership achieved more than isolated activities. By the end of 2025, more inclusive practices, stronger local capacities, and improved community–institution relations were in place around the Son-Kul Lake area, providing a foundation for sustained environmental stewardship and resilient livelihoods beyond the project cycle.



## **Future plans**

The Large Partnership Funding intervention concludes in 2025, while cooperation with the Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy continues under Sida-funded programming beyond the LPF framework. The transition reflects a shift from a time-bound intervention toward longer-term cooperation aimed at sustaining and embedding approaches developed during the project cycle.

Future cooperation builds on the institutional, community, and governance foundations established between 2023 and 2025. With participatory practices, community engagement mechanisms, and collaboration with public authorities now in place, the focus moves from piloting and consolidation toward sustained application and institutional anchoring within the Son-Kul Lake area.

# Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Women's Participation in Mountain Communities of Yagnob Valley, Tajikistan



*Little Earth is an environmental non-profit public organization based in Tajikistan. It is dedicated to accelerating sustainable development and combating climate change in communities across Tajikistan. Determined to enhance the community's role in promoting sustainable development practices in Tajikistan by placing environmental protection at the core of their work, the ultimate goal of Little Earth is to protect the fragile ecosystem for generations to come and build a more resilient world. Among the main areas of work are sustainable energy solutions, climate empowerment action, youth environmentalism, and education for sustainable development. Little Earth is dedicated to implementing sustainable solutions to protect the environment and reduce poverty.*



## Background

The partnership with Little Earth is rooted in long-term engagement with mountain communities in the Yagnob Valley of central Tajikistan, where geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and dependence on natural resources shape everyday life. Energy access is uneven and seasonal, and reliance on firewood and other traditional fuels places continuous pressure on fragile mountain ecosystems. These environmental challenges are closely linked to social structures in which women have limited opportunities to participate in community-level discussions related to resource management and local development.

The LPF intervention provides a multi-year framework to address these interconnected conditions in a sustained and coherent way. In the Yagnob Valley, environmental vulnerability and social exclusion are not discrete problems

that can be addressed through short-term engagement. They are embedded in long-standing practices, seasonal constraints, and institutional arrangements that require time to understand and respond to. A multi-year approach allows for continuity, gradual adaptation of methods, and engagement that is aligned with local rhythms and decision-making processes.

Within this context, Little Earth's long-standing presence and contextual expertise enable work that is grounded in local realities, while Central Asia Solidarity Groups contributes experience in supporting locally anchored initiatives that combine environmental sustainability with inclusive community processes. The intervention has therefore been structured as a continuous engagement over several years, allowing objectives related to sustainable natural resource management and community participation to be addressed in a consistent and context-sensitive manner.

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## Long-term goal

The long-term goal of the partnership is to contribute to the sustainable development of mountain communities and the conservation of ecosystems within the Yagnob national natural-ethnographic park in central Tajikistan, while supporting inclusive community processes that enable women to be present and recognized in local discussions related to natural resource management and community development.

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## Main activities during 2025

### **Opening and use of a solar-powered sewing workshop for women in the Yagnob Valley**

In 2025, a solar-powered sewing workshop was opened and put into use as a fully operational facility. The workshop was equipped with professional sewing machines and an autonomous solar energy system with a capacity of 2.4 kW, enabling independent operation despite unstable local electricity supply. Six women from four villages began using the space for regular production activities. In connection with the opening, Little Earth organised sewing and traditional embroidery training at the workshop site. Eight women participated in the training, with a smaller group receiving more intensive instruction to ensure that the workshop could be used consistently and managed locally.

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### **Installation and start-up of a shared solar-powered shower for local residents**

During 2025, a shared solar-powered shower facility was installed and introduced into community use. The facility was equipped with a 250-litre insulated tank and vacuum tube system, providing regular access to warm water. It was designed as a public resource for residents from several nearby villages, including Vahinzoy, Mahtimain, and Mushtife, and was estimated to serve around 50 people. Throughout the year, the shower was integrated into everyday community routines as a common facility.

### **Ongoing work on a solar greenhouse for household vegetable production in Mahtimain**

Construction work on a solar greenhouse in the village of Mahtimain continued during 2025. The greenhouse was developed with the aim of supporting household-level vegetable production for three families. Activities during the year focused on advancing construction and technical development, building on earlier planning and reflecting an effort to link renewable energy solutions with local food production and reduced dependence on external supplies.

### **Local coordination and discussions around shared use and management of new facilities**

In 2025, Little Earth facilitated local coordination and discussions connected to the use and management of the newly established facilities. These exchanges addressed practical arrangements related to access, shared use, and basic maintenance of the sewing workshop and the public shower. Attention was given to ensuring that women users were involved in these discussions and able to influence how the facilities would function in daily practice.

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## **Documentation and communication of 2025 developments within the wider partnership**

The final year of the LPF intervention included documentation and communication activities related to developments in 2025. Little Earth contributed material and information reflecting the use and operation of new infrastructure and community-level changes, feeding into broader partnership-level visibility and knowledge-sharing efforts. This work supported consolidation of experiences from the LPF cycle and ensured that developments in the Yagnob Valley were reflected in wider communication processes.

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**Results  
2023-2025**

### **Strengthened role and participation of women in community life**

Over the course of the intervention, women's position within their communities in the Yagnob Valley shifted from relative isolation toward more visible and active participation in collective matters. By the end of the project cycle, women were no longer engaged only as recipients of support but had become involved in discussions and decisions related to shared resources, community facilities, and local needs. This change was underpinned by increased confidence, accumulated experience, and the gradual normalization of women's presence in community-level processes. While women's participation in formal decision-making structures remains constrained by broader social norms, their role as knowledgeable and engaged community members had become more widely recognized by 2025.

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### **Improved livelihoods and economic agency for women**

By the end of the project cycle, women involved in the partnership had access to concrete opportunities for income generation and skills application. Clean-energy-based initiatives created conditions for women to engage in productive activities that were previously unavailable or inaccessible in the high-mountain context. The establishment of women-led economic spaces, combined with skills development, contributed to increased economic agency and diversification of livelihoods. These opportunities were directly linked to local needs and capacities, strengthening the likelihood that they will be maintained beyond the intervention period.

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### **Improved living conditions and reduced energy poverty**

Over the course of the intervention, access to renewable energy solutions contributed to measurable improvements in everyday living conditions for households and communities. By the final year of the project cycle, clean energy technologies were embedded in daily routines, enabling access to warm water, improved sanitation, and cleaner indoor environments. These changes reduced physical strain and time burdens associated with fuel collection and traditional energy use, particularly for women. The cumulative effect of these improvements strengthened household resilience and contributed to more stable and dignified living conditions in a remote and infrastructure-poor setting.

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### **Reduced pressure on natural resources and positive environmental effects**

By the end of the project cycle, the sustained use of renewable energy solutions had led to a significant reduction in reliance on firewood and other traditional fuels. The cumulative environmental effect of the intervention included an estimated annual reduction of approximately 50 tons of fuelwood consumption and a corresponding decrease in carbon emissions. These changes contributed directly to ecosystem conservation within the Yagnob national natural-ethnographic park and demonstrated the viability of clean energy alternatives in a fragile mountain environment. Importantly, these environmental results were closely linked to changes in everyday practices rather than one-off technical installations, strengthening their durability.

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### **Emergence of shared, community-owned infrastructure and practices**

Towards the end of the project cycle, collective infrastructure supported by the intervention was functioning as shared community assets rather than project-owned facilities. Local contributions of land, labor, and premises reflected a high degree of ownership and commitment. By 2025, routines for shared use, basic maintenance, and responsibility had been established through local cooperation, indicating that these facilities were socially embedded and likely to be sustained. This shift from individual-level support to community-owned solutions marked a qualitative change in how development initiatives were perceived and managed locally.

### **Strengthened local capacity and institutional credibility**

Over the course of the intervention, Little Earth consolidated its role as a trusted and capable civil society actor in the Yagnob Valley. By the end of the project cycle, the organization had demonstrated its ability to manage complex initiatives in a challenging geographical and social context while maintaining accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to community input. This credibility was reinforced through consistent engagement, adaptive implementation, and adherence to sound financial and administrative practices. As a result, the partnership rests on a stronger institutional foundation, supporting continuity beyond the LPF framework.

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### **External recognition and validation of the partnership approach**

The outcomes of the intervention gained international recognition during the project cycle through the 2024 Gender Just Climate Solutions Award in the Technical solutions category. Presented at COP29 in Baku and organized by WECF together with the Women and Gender Constituency, the award highlighted the relevance of an approach that combines gender equality, clean energy, and ecosystem protection in remote mountain communities. This recognition strengthened the visibility of the partnership beyond the immediate project context and served as external validation of a model grounded in women's participation, practical renewable energy solutions, and locally rooted environmental action. While not a primary objective of the intervention, this acknowledgment reinforced the credibility of the

results achieved and supported the partnership's standing in future dialogue with donors and other stakeholders.

### **Future plans**

The LPF cycle concluded in 2025, with key results consolidated and embedded at community level in the Yagnob Valley. Building on these outcomes, the partnership with Little Earth continues beyond LPF through Sida-funded cooperation. Future engagement will focus on consolidating existing infrastructure, supporting women-led initiatives, and strengthening sustainable natural resource management practices. Drawing on lessons from the completed cycle, the partnership will prioritize continuity, local ownership, and adaptive approaches, positioning the LPF period as a foundation for longer-term cooperation rather than an endpoint.

# Breaking Silence around Domestic Violence – Promoting public debate in Uzbekistan



*NeMolchi.UZ is an initiative established in 2017 to amplify the voices of women and girls experiencing gender-based violence in Uzbekistan. Dedicated to breaking the culture of silence, shame, and normalization of abuse, NeMolchi.UZ operates a web platform that provides guidance for those facing domestic violence or other forms of maltreatment. Additionally, the platform functions as a space for sharing firsthand accounts, enabling women and girls to gain support and raise collective awareness.*

## Background

Gender-based and domestic violence remain persistent challenges in Uzbekistan, rooted in entrenched social norms, stigma, and unequal power relations. Many survivors face significant barriers to seeking help, including fear of social consequences, pressure to reconcile with perpetrators, and limited access to reliable information about their rights and available protection mechanisms.

In recent years, legislative reforms have introduced stronger legal provisions addressing domestic and sexualized violence. These developments represent an important step forward in formal recognition of the problem. However, the practical implementation of these legal frameworks continues to face structural and societal obstacles. Gaps in enforcement, limited legal literacy, and prevailing cultural attitudes mean that formal protections do not automatically translate into effective access to justice and safety for survivors.

At the same time, civil society actors working on gender equality and violence prevention operate in a complex and sensitive environment that requires careful navigation, institutional resilience, and sustainable organizational practices. Ensuring continuity of work, maintaining safe channels for dialogue, and strengthening internal capacities are essential for long-term engagement on these issues.

Within this context, the partnership between Central Asia Solidarity Groups and NeMolchi.UZ has focused on reinforcing the organizational and methodological foundations necessary for sustained impact. Over the course of the intervention, emphasis has been placed on strengthening internal capacities and reinforcing sustainable methods of engagement. This has enabled the partner to continue contributing to informed public discussion and expanding access to rights-based information.

## Long-term goal of the partnership

The long-term goal of the partnership is to contribute to a more informed and responsive societal environment in Uzbekistan where women and girls are aware of their rights, public discourse on gender-based and domestic violence is grounded in evidence and survivor-centered perspectives, and local civil society actors are equipped with the capacities and networks needed to sustain their work over time.

## Main activities during 2025

### Community engagement and peer learning

In 2025, the partner strengthened structured community engagement through regular peer-learning and discussion formats. These recurring spaces enabled participants to exchange experiences, reflect on challenges, and deepen their understanding of gender equality

and violence prevention from a rights-based perspective. Particular attention was given to welcoming new participants and broadening access to these discussions, contributing to the gradual expansion of a supportive and informed community. The capacities and networks needed to sustain their work over time.

### **Capacity strengthening and organizational resilience**

Throughout the year, thematic workshops and facilitated sessions were conducted to enhance participants' analytical skills, communication practices, and ability to engage constructively in public dialogue. Efforts were also directed toward reinforcing internal coordination and sustaining volunteer engagement.

### **Information production and public awareness**

The partner continued producing and disseminating informational and educational materials in accessible formats and languages. These materials addressed legal rights, available protection mechanisms, and broader societal dimensions of gender-based violence. Through digital and community-based dissemination, the initiative contributed to improved legal literacy and more informed public discussion.

### **Documentation and analytical work**

Structured documentation and analysis related to the practical application of existing legislation were maintained during 2025. This work supported evidence-informed dialogue and strengthened the partner's capacity to identify systemic gaps affecting survivors' access to protection and justice.

### **Networking and stakeholder dialogue**

Engagement with relevant stakeholders was sustained in order to maintain constructive communication channels and support continuity of dialogue.



## **Results**

Over the 2023 to 2025 period, the partnership has contributed to measurable progress in the legal, public, and civil society landscape related to gender based and domestic violence in Uzbekistan. The intervention evolved over time, moving from legislative advocacy to implementation monitoring and later to community resilience and sustainability.

### **Strengthened legal protections**

In the early phase of the cycle, sustained advocacy and public engagement coincided with the introduction of stronger legal provisions addressing domestic violence and enhancing protections for women and minors. These developments represented a significant structural step forward and created a clearer formal basis for accountability and survivor protection. Compared to the initial expectations at the start of the intervention, legislative progress advanced more rapidly than anticipated.

### **Improved attention to implementation of the law**

Following these legal reforms, the focus shifted toward examining how the new frameworks function in practice. Through structured documentation and analytical work, recurring gaps in enforcement and procedural challenges were identified. This phase contributed to more informed dialogue and reinforced the importance of implementation, not only legislation.

### **Expanded public awareness and access to information**

Across the cycle, consistent production and dissemination of educational materials contributed to increased legal literacy and broader public engagement. The availability of content in multiple languages supported more inclusive access to information. Public discussions

and awareness initiatives contributed to keeping gender-based violence visible in public discourse over several years rather than as isolated events.

### ***Stronger feminist networks and community cohesion***

By the final year of the intervention, regular community meetings, activist workshops, and safe discussion spaces had become structured and recurring elements of the initiative's work. These formats contributed to stronger connections among activists and volunteers, improved peer support, and greater inclusion of women who had not previously engaged in feminist initiatives. The movement became more cohesive and better able to sustain dialogue beyond individual campaigns.

### ***Enhanced organizational capacity and sustainability***

Between 2023 and 2025, the partner strengthened its internal coordination, documentation practices, and strategic planning processes. Programmatic, administrative, and communication workflows became more structured, supporting continuity in

a sensitive operational environment. This development has improved the initiative's ability to manage risks, apply a rights based approach in practice, and maintain constructive engagement with relevant stakeholders.

While legislative achievements exceeded initial expectations, persistent social stigma and structural barriers continue to limit full societal transformation. Lessons from earlier years informed the 2025 emphasis on safe spaces, community building, and knowledge dissemination. As a result, by the end of the cycle, the initiative demonstrates greater resilience, stronger networks, and more sustainable methods of engagement.

### ***Future plans***

Building on the results achieved during 2023 to 2025, the partnership will continue to strengthen long term methods for informed public dialogue and community resilience around gender-based violence. The focus will remain on maintaining structured community formats, expanding access to rights-based knowledge, and reinforcing sustainable methods of documentation and communication.

# 'Reviving the Roots': Soil Health and Food Security in Kyrgyzstan



## Background

Kyrgyzstan is facing serious and progressive land degradation due to poor agricultural practices. Lack of support for smallholder farmers, who make up the majority of farming entities in Kyrgyzstan, forces them to prioritise unsustainable practices that offer immediate gains over long-term soil care. Land degradation has a serious impact on livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan, limiting access to vital resources, including food and water.

Traditionally, however, perception of soil in Kyrgyzstan generally used to be more holistic and ecocentric, reflecting the Kyrgyz ethos of harmonious coexistence with nature. Soviet practices that prioritised yield maximisation and

human dominance over nature, coupled with years of unregulated land use after Kyrgyzstan gained independence, has shifted the paradigm towards extractive profit-driven approaches.

## Goal of the project

In 2025, we conducted the project called 'Reviving the Roots', funded by the Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI). The project was implemented in partnership with CAG's long-term partner from Kyrgyzstan, El-Too, and it aimed to revive a holistic perception of soil and support sustainable soil management practices in Kyrgyzstan.

The long-term goal is to contribute to enhanced food security and sustainable livelihoods for rural Kyrgyz communities.

The project primarily worked with online rural audiences, smallholder farmers in Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions, while also reaching a wider farming community across Kyrgyzstan through farmer networks, online platforms, and media channels. It actively engaged artisans, folk artists, university students, and collaborated with duty bearers at local and national levels.

## Main activities and results

### ***A study on soil perceptions and soil care practices in Kyrgyzstan***

The first component of the project was a study of historical and current local perceptions of soil and practices related to soil management and soil care in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul and Naryn regions. Together with nine students from four Kyrgyz universities, El-Too conducted 23 interviews and 6 focus group discussions. The participants of the study included smallholders, village elders, soil scientists, agronomists, legal experts, civil society representatives, and traditional epic poets, providing a nuanced view from different perspectives. The study also analysed several folkloric sources, including proverbs, the Manas epic, short epic poems, and the work of poet improvisers to gain insight into historic and cultural perceptions of soil.



An analytical report was published and disseminated among universities, research institutions, NGOs, and government stakeholders. Importantly, the study served as the conceptual foundation for the rest of the project.



### ***Folk Art (aitysh) grounded in research***

One of the project's most innovative outcomes was the transformation of research findings into traditional oral poetry. Six akyns (singing poets) developed their performances on the basis of the study's findings. Accompanied by the traditional komuz (Kyrgyz national music instrument), the poets sang about the deep spiritual and ecological relationship between people and soil. Complex scientific concepts such as soil degradation, loss of organic matter, and principles of sustainable agriculture were translated into powerful and emotionally resonant poetic narratives. Seven video performances were produced and disseminated through YouTube, Instagram, and farmers' WhatsApp groups. This has widened the outreach of the project, with the most viewed videos

on YouTube and Instagram reaching between 19 and 40K views. Audience testimonials reflected strong emotional engagement, as these pieces were perceived as a continuation of a tradition of singing about nature that stems from nineteenth-century poets.

### **Mother Earth travelling exhibition**

The anthropological findings also formed the conceptual basis of the travelling exhibition "Mother Earth." During a three-day art camp, artist-designers and nine students translated research insights into interactive installations combining soil, recycled materials, scientific knowledge, and traditional symbolism.

The exhibition is interactive and invites visitors to think about their relationship with the land and nature in both practical and spiritual senses. It combines art, science, and practical approaches and provides visitors with knowledge about how to care for the soil. Many of the artworks incorporate both waste materials and soil itself.

The exhibition opened at Ton Fest in August 2025 and later travelled to the Naryn Art Gallery, a national youth forum in Karakol, and Kasym Tynystanov University. In total, more than 1,500 visitors attended across locations, including farmers, local authorities, diplomats, students, activists, and community members.

The Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports, and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic invited the exhibition to be presented at the youth forum "Kyrgyzstan of My Dreams" in October 2025. After travelling across the country, the exhibition became permanent at the Bokonbaevo tourist centre. A digital version of the exhibition is available in three languages: Kyrgyz, English, and Russian.

### **Policy Dialogue**

Two consultative seminars were conducted with 30–40 national and local duty bearers, soil experts, researchers, and civil society representatives. These meetings contributed to the formation of policy guidelines and practical recommendations to strengthen soil protection and sustainable land management.

### **Youth Empowerment and Professional Impact**

Eighteen students from six universities actively participated in research and exhibition development. They gained practical experience in fieldwork, data analysis, research ethics, teamwork, curatorial processes, and public engagement. Four students directly involved in anthropological research have already secured employment in NGOs, research institutions, or international projects as a result of their participation.



### **Public Outreach and Partnerships**

The project significantly expanded its digital presence, growing by approximately 4,000 followers and reaching 7,000 subscribers. Educational videos on soil health, biohumus, mulching, soil micro-life, and sustainable practices averaged 2,000–3,000 views, with several exceeding 40,000 views.

Project materials were disseminated through the social media channels and websites of Central Asia Solidarity Groups, El-Too and SIANI, reaching diverse and international audiences. Strong partnerships were established with universities, agro-centres, museums, environmental networks, and civil society organizations. Institutions provided studios and exhibition spaces, while media appearances on radio and regional state television expanded national visibility. The project also received academic recognition, with invitations to present research findings at university conferences.

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# ***Information, Advocacy, and Training Activities***

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## ***Online Advocacy and Information Work***

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Central Asia Solidarity Groups continued to use its website and social media channels, including Instagram and Facebook, as key platforms for information work and advocacy. These channels are used to increase awareness and understanding of developments in Central Asia, while highlighting the work of local civil society actors and community-based initiatives across the region. A central objective of this work is to address the limited public knowledge about Central Asia and to make locally grounded perspectives accessible to wider audiences.

During the year, CAG's online platforms served to connect partner organizations in Central Asia with international audiences, including civil society actors, researchers, and academic networks in Sweden and Europe. Content produced by partners was disseminated through CAG's channels, with a focus on making locally generated materials accessible beyond their immediate contexts. This included English-language dissemination of partner content and cross-posting between organizational platforms, as well as the use of written and visual materials to support engagement and information-sharing.

As part of this work, CAG contributed to the international dissemination of knowledge and experience generated within collaborative initiatives, including research-based insights and reflections emerging from partner-led work. Online materials were shared through CAG's own networks as well as through external platforms linked to international civil society and academic communities. Several publications and digital materials reached audiences both within and outside Central Asia and generated engagement over the course of the year.





## ***Trainings and Methodology Development***

During the year, CAG has priorities developing new methodologies in all our thematic areas – often-times in close cooperation with our partners, based on the contextual community needs they encounter and aim to support. CAG has implemented some workshops and pilot initiatives related to the themes and projects we work with in Central Asia, but for a Swedish audience, for instance related to permaculture, renewable technology, community building and regenerative farming.

One area that particularly stands out as an innovative pursuit in 2025 is building new pedagogical frameworks for working with embodied learning and somatic education. CAG has identified this as a real need in the context of civil society methodologies and theory of changes; a perspective that is often sorely missing which significantly impacts the outcomes of interventions. CAG has hosted various workshops and a longer summer training to explore these themes and topics and co-create new ways of incorporating a somatic and relational approach. This learning, in turn, has influenced the design of several project activities and forms of collaboration, i.e. how we work with vulnerable activist communities from a safety and wellbeing perspective.

CAG has collaborated with different trainers, institutions and informal actors in this field, and been active in launching the platform Nätverket för somatisk folkbildning together with a diverse, multi-disciplinary and international team, including experts from Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Germany, Canada, France and Norway. This platform aims to highlight the need for more somatic and relational approaches to working with a wide range of social issues and how many social issues stem from disembodiment.

# Financial Report

## Income statement

**2025-01-01**      **2024-01-01**  
**2025-12-31**      **2024-12-31**

### Operating incomes, changes in inventories etc.

Grants	2 937 212	2 997 436
Other incomes	-	-
<b>Sum operating incomes, changes in inventories etc.</b>	<b>2 937 212</b>	<b>2 997 436</b>

## Operating costs

Development projects	-2 787 509	-2 449 616
Exchanges and trainings	-89 858	-73 199
Volunteering and activist residencies	0	-112 810
Information and advocacy	-440	-15 246
Other external costs	-333 302	-166 497
<b>Sum operating costs</b>	<b>-3 211 109</b>	<b>-2 817 368</b>

### Operating profit

**476**      **7 845**

### Results after financial posts

**-264 760**      **187 913**

### Results before tax

**-264 760**      **187 913**

### Results of the year

**-264 760**      **187 913**

## Balance sheet

2025-12-31

2024-12-31

### Assets

#### Current assets

##### Current receivables

Other receivables

65 980

17 284

Sum current receivables

65 980

17 284

##### Cash and bank balance

Cash and bank balance

2 538 705

854 156

Sum Cash and bank balance

2 538 705

854 156

##### Sum current assets

**2 604 685**

**871 440**

##### Sum assets

**2 604 685**

**871 440**

## Equity and liabilities

### Equity

Balanced profit or loss

805 392

617 480

Result of the year

-264 760

187 913

##### Sum equity

**540 632**

**805 393**

### Current liabilities

Tax liabilities

-

-

Other liabilities

41 211

18 808

Accrued expenses and deferred income

2 022 842

47 239

##### Sum current liabilities

**2 064 053**

**66 047**

##### Sum equity and liabilities

**2 604 685**

**871 439**

All amounts in SEK

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# Acknowledgments

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## Individuals

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Aida Akhmedova  
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Anton Timoshenko  
Timur Idrisov  
Anisa Abibulloeva  
Anara Alymkulova  
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Erik Abrahamsson,

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## Organizations

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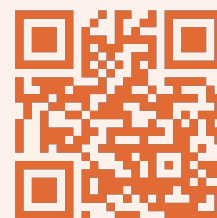
Grimslövs folkhögskola  
Gylleboverket  
Holma folkhögskola  
Nätverket för somatisk folkbildning

Somatic Academy Berlin  
Skaparkollektivet Forma  
ABF Malmö

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