

Theme:	Engaging Actors with Radical Religious Narratives in Conflict Transformation	Year: 2016
Project Title:	Preventing religious radicalism through skills training in madrasahs ¹	
Name of Applicant:	Nurlanbek Tokonov/Executive Director of AVEP PF	
Institution:	AVEP Public Fund	
Country:	The Kyrgyz Republic	Start Date: January 1, 2017
Website:	www.avep.info	Completion Date: December 31, 2017

1. Executive Summary



The Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) is a secular state with population of 5,7 million people. It is a former member of Soviet Union that got its independence in 1991. During the Soviet time the communist ideology was dominating strongly so the religions were not practiced widely. After the collapse of the USSR Islam got activated. As a result of support of interested Arabic movements and natural human need in filling the vacuum created after the termination of the Soviet era in the 24 years of independence we got about 2500 new mosques all over the country. Although Islam first came to this region back

in the 7th century already it has never had so much spread and influence as during these 24 years of independence. Along with the number of mosques the number of madrasahs has been also growing here. At present it is about 60 madrasahs all over the country. Additionally there is another bunch of numerous Islamic foundations and other public organizations. One of the biggest national concerns of the country has become spreading of violent extremism ideas among the population of Kyrgyzstan in the last 2-3 years. According to the last official data more than 350 Kyrgyz citizens have left for Syria to fight for Islamic State (IS). The absolute number is comparatively not big but the dynamics is really threatening as 2-3 years ago there was nobody from Kyrgyzstan fighting for Islamic State anywhere. Islamic State is not the only extremist organization active in Kyrgyzstan and prohibited here officially. This is a list of more than 20 organizations acknowledged as extremist and therefore prohibited: Al Qaeda, Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic State, HIZB-UT-TAHRIR etc. One of the victims and targets of the extremist propaganda is youth. The extremist recruiters are using all available resources and ways of communication and propaganda such as social mass media, mosques, madrasahs, universities and any other places of people gathering. There are different ways of stimulation used by recruiters but the main are financial and ideological.

In September 2014 AVEP started implementing a one-year project called: "Madrasah - skills training in rural areas" financed by the US embassy in Kyrgyzstan. What is interesting is that the US embassy approached AVEP itself. The target region was selected to be the Chui oblast and the outreach is 5 madrasahs. The project budget is 100 000 USD. At least 100 students are supposed to be trained by the end of the project.

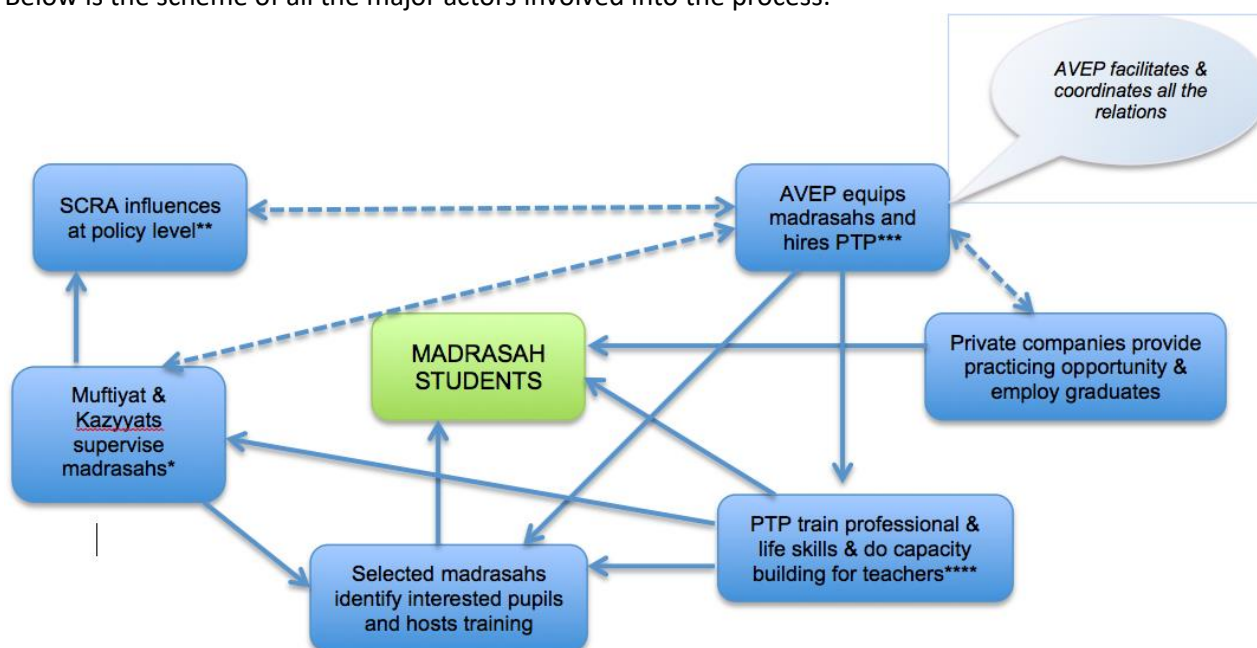
The experience in Chui oblast (province) showed that many madrasah students are coming from poor religious families. Such young people tend to be vulnerable to external influence and demonstrate poorer skills for adaptation to the life after the madrasah. Certainly some students are initially determined to continue their religious education at a higher level abroad. But our work with 5 Chui madrasahs convinced us that the demand for professional and life skills is really big. Seamstress, welder, cook and electrician – these are the demanded professions that were identified during the labour market analyses done right in the beginning of the project. Under the life skills we mean skills like conflict management, critical thinking, tolerance, family budget and job search. Majority of students get enrolled to madrasahs at around 15-16 years old. So some students come to madrasahs without completing even the ninth class (certificate of secondary education). These young people will not be able to study both at college or university level. Professional skills training for them is a very good chance to probably find a new motivation in their life and a profession that they can make living with. Students at madrasahs have only religious topics and therefore they are a bit restricted in their mind and are not very much aware of other opportunities available in this life.

¹ Madrasah is the Arabic word (of Semitic origin; viz Hebrew midrash) for any type of educational institution, whether secular or religious (of any religion), Wikipedia.

Below are two major outcomes expected as a result of this approach implementation.

Outcome 1	Assumption
Madrasah students gain in-demand professional and life skills to become more competitive and adapted to the civic life.	The students value the new skills as they see them as a way to realize their potential and to become more independent. It is important to help young students understand that there are also other incentives and directions besides religious study.
Outcome 2	Assumption
Madrasah graduates get employed.	Employment will prove to students the value of training. Employment will mean financial independence that is one the basis that helps a person to be really free in following his/her own visions.

Below is the scheme of all the major actors involved into the process:



*Muftiyat: Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan

Kazyyat: Oblast division of Muftiyat

**SCRA: State Commission on Religious Affairs

***AVEP: Agricultural Vocational Education Project (the name of the very first project implemented by AVEP public fund and later named after it when registered as a legal entity)

****PTP: Private Training Provider

2. Project Outline

Major activities

Below is the table with the main activities anticipated to reach the objectives:

Outcome 1	Activities	Comments
Madrasah students gain in-demand professional and life skills to become more competitive and adapted to the civic life.	1. Signing MoU* with madrasahs in Issyk-Kul and Naryn oblasts, Kazyyats of two oblasts and Muftiyat.	1. In total it is 3 madrasahs located in Karakol town (Issyk-Kul oblast) and Kochkor village and Naryn town (Naryn oblast).
	2. Labour Market Analyses (LMA) of in-demand professions in relevant regions.	2. Similar LMA was done in Chui oblast.
	3. Identification of efficient and appropriate private training providers. (PTP).	3. PTP will be identified through standard AVEP procurement procedures.
	4. Equipment of madrasahs according to	4. The experience in Chui oblast

	identified professional courses.	will help to make sure smooth and qualitative equipment of chosen madrasahs.
	5. Development and adoption of the training modules jointly with PTP and madrasahs.	5. AVEP possesses training modules of most of the in-demand professional courses in the market.
	6. Mutual agreement of schedule and format of training with PTP and madrasahs.	6. The format for life and professional skills training will be different as the number of training hours and the specific of content is different.
	7. In collaboration with project partners AVEP identifies interested potential employers of madrasah students according to the selected professions.	7. This is not only for finding employment opportunities but also at for helping students get practical experience.
	8. Delivery of training to madrasah students.	8. AVEP facilitates smooth, timely and quality delivery of training.
	9. Delivery of life skills training to madrasah teachers and workers of Muftiyat and Kazyyats.	9. The idea is to build capacity of the teachers and the workers of Muftiyat and Kazyyats in terms of particular life skills described later in the document to help them and the students think in the same way.
Outcome 2	Activities	Comments
Madrasah graduates become employed.	1. AVEP facilitates internship and employment opportunities for madrasah graduates. Who successfully completed the courses and are willing to start working.	1. We are talking mainly about the graduates as for still studying students it will be problematic.

*MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

Training approach

The idea is to organize in-house training at madrasahs by attracting appropriate private training provider. For the selected professions the relevant equipment and facilities shall be provided for the madrasahs. The training approach consists of two major blocks: professional skills and life skills. Below are some details based on the example of the Madrasah Project in Chui oblast:

Type of skill	Duration	Frequency
Professional skills: 1. Seamstress 2. Welder 3. Electrician 4. Cook	Any professional course is designed for 120 hours.	During 6 weeks students study 3 days a week. It can be Saturday, Sunday and Monday. But it may vary from madrasah to madrasah. Some may prefer Friday to Monday because of own religious classes. Others may prefer not to study on Fridays, as this is a holiday for Muslims.
Life skills: 1. How to find a job (for students only) 2. Family budget (for students only) Additional topics (both for students and teachers) for the Madrasah Project in Naryn and Issyk-Kul oblasts: 3. Critical thinking	The whole life skill module will be 36 hours including the additional topics.	But it is expected that they will be given in 6 days within two weeks (3 days a week). For teachers the schedule might be a bit different depending on their availability.

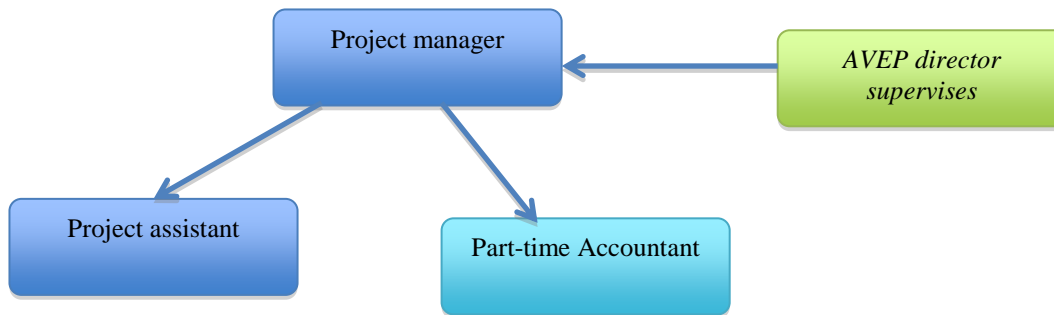
4. Means of efficient conflicts resolution		
5. Tolerance		

By the proposed additional training AVEP is intending to help young people at madrasahs:

- not to believe anything automatically without own critical assessment of the things proposed or imposed;
- to be aware of why various conflicts happen and how to resolve them in the most efficient way;
- to become more tolerant to other views, cultures, religions, nationalities etc.

Project management

Below is the proposed staffing for the **Madrasah Project in Naryn and Issyk-Kul oblasts**:



Below is the table with more details about the functions and roles of the presented project team:

#	Position	Function	% of employment	Comments
1	AVEP director	Supervision and strategic guidance	30	Participation in important meetings with relevant stakeholders. Checking the reports and providing advice on implementation of the project.
2	Project manager	Overall operational management	100	Responsible for achieving the goals, planning and organization of activities, coordination of stakeholders etc.
3	Project Assistant	Office back up for the manager on logistics, translation and other overall assistance.	100	
5	Accountant	Accounting	30	The current AVEP accountant will be 30% budgeted on this project.

Project monitoring

The project team will be regularly monitoring and reflecting in the reports the whole process of recruitment of partners, students, trainers, delivery of courses and other project related issues. Below is the preliminary M&E plan for the madrasah skills training project in Naryn and Issyk-Kul oblasts.

M&E plan

Outcome 1	Activities	Indicator	Means of verification	Frequency
Madrasah students gain in-demand professional and life skills to become more competitive and adapted to the civic life.	1. Signing MoU with madrasahs in Issyk-Kul and Naryn oblasts, Kazyyats of two oblasts and Muftiyat.	1. 3 available madrasahs confirmed.	1. Memorandums signed by AVEP and madrasahs.	1. Upon selection of a madrasah
	2. Labour Market Analyses (LMA) of in-demand professions in relevant regions.	2. At least 3 professions identified.	2. LMA report	2. Upon LMA completion
	3. Identification of efficient and appropriate private training providers. (PTP).	3. At least one appropriate PTP identified.	3.1 Profile of PTP 3.2 Memorandums signed by AVEP and PTP.	3. Upon selection a PTP
	4. Equipment of madrasahs according to identified professional courses.	4. 3 madrasahs are fully equipped according to selected profession.	4.1 Contracts with suppliers and installers of the relevant equipment. 4.2 Madrasahs' written confirmations of the received equipment.	Upon completion of equipment process
	5. Development and adoption of the training modules jointly with PTP and madrasahs.	5. The adopted training modules for each selected profession have the most updated content and at the same time are possible to be comprehended by students properly.	5.1 Feedback and confirmation of AVEP. 5.2 Feedback of trainers (observation) and students during the training process	Upon confirmation and during the training process
	6. Mutual agreement of schedule and format of training with PTP and madrasahs.	6. Each course is delivered on time and properly.	6.1 Observations 6.2 Partners reports. 6.3 Project reports	6.1 During the training 6.2 Upon completion of the training 6.3 Half-yearly
	7. In collaboration with project partners AVEP identifies appropriate internship and practicing opportunities for madrasah students according to the selected professions.	7. At least one practicing opportunity (site visit) is identified for each madrasah.	7. Memorandum signed between a madrasah and an organization providing practicing opportunity	7. Upon agreement with a potential organization.
	8. Delivery of professional and life skills training to madrasah students.	8.1 At least 50 students got the training. 8.2 Level of	8.1 The report of the training provider. 8.2 Pre-training	8.1 Upon each training group 8.2 Upon

		knowledge of enrolled madrasah students. 8.3 80% of students demonstrated improvement of their knowledge after the training.	test 8.3 Post-training test	enrolment 8.3 Upon completion of the training
	9. Delivery of life skills training to madrasah teachers and workers of Muftiyat and Kazyyats.	9.1 At least 10 madrasah teachers and workers of Muftiyat & Kazyyats participated in the training. 9.2 100% of the trained teachers and workers found the life skills training useful and necessary for the students.	9.1 The report of the training provider. 9.2 The questionnaire after the training.	9.1 Upon completion of the training 9.2 Upon completion of the training
Outcome 2	Actviities	Indicators	Means of verification	Frequency
Madrasah graduates get employed.	AVEP facilitates and traces employment of madrasah graduates that successfully completed the courses and are willing to start working.	1. At least 1 identified employer for each madrasah interested in hiring madrasah graduates. 2. At least 75% of graduates are satisfied with the quality and usefulness of the training. 3. At least 66% of total graduates employed or self-employed.	1. Observations of PTP and madrasahs described in the project reports. 2. Tracer-study ² of graduates. 3. Tracer-study of graduates.	1. Half-yearly 2,3. In three months after every training group completion

² The instrument to follow up the madrasah graduates that completed the professional courses to check: (within 3 months after the training completion):

- If the training was qualitative, useful and effective;
- If their life quality improved or not;
- If they were employed or self-employed as a result of the training;
- If their income increased or not.

Sustainability of the approach

The project will achieve sustainability by:

- **Increasing human capital** by sharing new knowledge, technology, and best practices with PTP and personnel of supporting organizations
- **Heightening social capital** by strengthening Muftiyat, madrasahs and their graduates
- **Providing income opportunities** for madrasah students

The project is both institutionally and economically viable because project partner organizations that are satisfied with the results of cooperation can replicate the experience using their own financial and human capacities.

The project has a clear strategy of institutional arrangements; it foresees substantial support for madrasah graduates, continued support to organizations that work in the public interest. The project differentiates between development costs and operational costs. For instance, the project will support the development of the courses for PTP, but will only provide the initial financial contributions needed for implementation.

At this moment it is important to support provision of the professional skills training for this specific target group to get involved madrasahs and their students into the process. It is vital to let students understand that the way for employment and better adaptation for the civic life is open for them along with the religious education and they do not exclude each other. In future the equipped and trained master-madrasahs will be able to organize the training themselves. By the end of the project they will have enough capacity and contacts on organization of professional skills training at their sites. The main provision for this to happen is interest from students' side and commitment from the madrasah directors.

By selecting committed madrasahs, identifying demanded professions and skills, delivering qualitative training and facilitating links to private sector the project aims at establishing sustainable scheme when committed madrasahs will keep on training interested students on vital skills. No madrasah is financed by the state in KG. All of them have mainly external donors (funds, companies) who have been supporting them. As long as students value the skills training and the madrasah directors are committed to provide them with other necessary skills besides the religious study the approach will be sustainable. Otherwise majority (as Muftiyat confirms) of the madrasah students come from poor and disadvantaged families and therefore they will not be able to afford the training.

Proposed madrasahs

As AVEP has been already doing such work in Chui oblast we decided to expand this activity to other regions in the North of the country and namely to cover Naryn and Issyk-Kul oblasts. This decision was also made based on the available budget. AVEP has conducted preliminary in-depth interviews with the available madrasah directors in targeted regions to understand better the available conditions, context and see if there is commitment from their side.



In Issyk-Kul oblast (in orange on the map of Kyrgyzstan, the little yellow circle is the capital, Bishkek) there is only one madrasah located in Karakol town. It was founded in 2006 and currently has **14 students (boys)**. In May 2015 10 students graduated. It is planned to enroll another 15 for the new school year that starts in September 2016 (ends in May 2017). Average age of enrolled students is 15-16 years old. In this particular region there is potential demand for cooks and welders.

In Naryn oblast there are at the moment two acting madrasahs: one in Kochkor village and another one in Naryn town. The madrasah in Kochkor is a female one and currently has **30 girls** studying (15 girls per each course). According to the Kochkor madrasah director in the region such professions like seamstress and cook might be demanded. In the madrasah in Naryn town there are **25 students** currently.

So, in total 3 madrasahs currently have **69 students**. Plus another 40-45 students enrolled in September 2016 in total. All three madrasahs have 3-year programme.



3. Relevance

By this initiative AVEP is not engaging actors with radical religious narratives directly but preventing and mitigating involvement of young people into violent extremist movements. On the one hand the war in Syria was the reason why already more than 350 young people left from Kyrgyzstan to support Islamic State. So the conflict is physically taking place not in Kyrgyzstan but does it decrease our concern much? The problem is not where these young people are going to fight. The problem is why they do that. As mentioned earlier the reasons are financial and ideological. Some people may believe in the ideas of Islamic State. That is why sometimes educated and successful people go there. But it is also true that some young people go there because they do not have proper means of making living and we know that IS recruiters promise money that these poor young people cannot make at home. Jobless people have higher chances to get marginalized and to feel forgotten by the state and the society. By this small project we would like to make our joint contribution with Foundations into helping the targeted young people understand that there are other incentives in this life that can become drivers and means of making living at the same time. We want to do our best to make sure that the targeted madrasahs and the people somehow linked to them both personally and indirectly to be away as much as possible from the influence of the violent extremist recruiters. It is not only about the war in Syria but it is about creating conditions for people not to let themselves get involved into such movements. The Kyrgyz Government has already admitted that religious extremism has become the number one threat to the national security. In developing countries like Kyrgyzstan poor economic situation is the key reason of social tension and marginalization of the population. The government is trying to support the vulnerable people but it is still not enough. Often it is not about absence of jobs but it is about lack of skills to become competitive and demanded on the labor market. Some people may be angry at the government for not having a job but in fact they may just lack some skills and qualification to find a job or find a better job.

In the last 1-2 years such extremist organizations like Salafism, Jihadism, Tabligi Jaamat and HIZB-UT-TAHRIR has become really active in Naryn and Issyk-Kul oblasts. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2015 already more than 80 people are suspected to be members of the above-mentioned organizations. Regularly the police have been catching some of them with a lot of extremist literature both on paper and electronic media. The problem with these extremist organizations is not only in recruiting young people for the war in Syria but also appealing to people to depose the current constitutional order. The religious extremist propaganda takes advantage of the fact that some local people being Muslims sympathize if not all but pretty many their ideas.

4. Changes since the Initial Application

In the project staff, Vocational Education expert was taken out and her responsibilities were moved to the project manager. The workload of the AVEP director and the accounted were changed to 30% in order 20% which was shown in the Lol.

5. Project Schedule

Nr.	Task	Start date	End date	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Mar 2017	Apr 2017	May 2017	Jun 2017	Jul 2017	Aug 2017	Sep 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
1	Signing MoU with madrasahs, Kazyyats and Muftiyat			■											
2	Labour Market Analyses			■											
3	Identification of appropriate Private Training Provider			■											
4	Equipment of selected madrasahs				■										
5	Development/adoption of the training module				■	■									
6	Agreement of schedule and format of training					■									
7	Identification of internship opportunities					■									
8	Delivery of training both to students and teachers						■	■		■	■				
9	Tracer study													■	
10	Monitoring				■		■	■		■	■			■	
11	Reporting						■					■			■

6. Budget

1. Applicant and Project Information

Name of Applicant	Nurlanbek Tokonov
Name of Organisation	Public Fund AVEP
Project Title	Preventing religious radicalism through skills training in madrasahs
Project Duration	January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017

2. Project Budget (*all costs in USD*)

Nr.	Cost item (please describe in detail)	(1) Donors of GlobalGiving (USD)	(2) Other resources (USD)	(3) Total resources (USD)
Personnel (<i>salaries for staff, insurance costs etc.</i>)				
1				
1.1	Project Coordinator, 100%	6600		6600
1.2.	Project Office \ Assistant, 100%	4200		4200
1.3.	AVEP Director, 30%	3000	1500	4500
1.4.	AVEP Accountant, 30%	1800	900	2700
	Subtotal Personnel	15600	2400	18000
Travel (<i>flights, travel insurance, local travel, accommodation, daily expenses etc.</i>)				
2				
2.1	Transport costs	2400		2400
2.2.	Accommodation and daily expenses	4200		4200
2.3.	Subtotal Travel	6600	0	6600
Activities (<i>workshop costs, materials, food and beverages, advertising, publications etc.</i>)				
3				
3.1	Labour Market Analyses	800		800
3.2	Development/adoption of the training module	2000		2000
3.3	Provision with Equipment for courses	14000		14000
3.4	Delivery of training	3000		3000
3.5	Tracer study	1000		1000
3.6	Upgrading trainings for teachers and madrasah staff	2000		2000
	Subtotal Activities	22800	0	22800
Administration (<i>rent, utilities, telephone, internet, printing, office supplies etc.</i>)				
4				
4.1	Office rent	1200	2400	3600

4.2	Communication costs (phone, internet, fax)	1200	1200	2400
4.3	Other costs - Translation / Audit / bank fees etc.	2000		2000
	Subtotal Administration	4400	3600	8000
5 Equipment (<i>computer etc. - note: construction costs and capital investments are excluded from funding</i>)				
5.1	Purchase of 2 laptops		1200	1200
5.2	Purchase of 1 copy machine		600	600
	Subtotal Equipment	0	1800	1800
	TOTAL Budgeted	49400	7800	57200