



# QUEERING THE WORLD

ANNUAL REPORT KYRGYZ INDIGO  
2017



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# Several statistics



Total coverage of LGBTIAQ people



people were informed about LGBT activism and events



received counseling from a psychologist



underwent rapid HIV testing



lived safely in the shelter



volunteers came to us



trainings / workshops conducted for different people



mothers and fathers of LGBTI in the "Club of Parents"



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## Greeting of the Executive Director

Hello, dear reader of the Kyrgyz Indigo report for 2017. I warmly welcome you all and am proud to provide an overview of our activities, results, and lessons learned. This report is also special as it is the first published report for the period of our activity.

Looking back, one can see everyday changes due to the processes on which we can influence. The year 2017 was declared as the year of morality, upbringing, and culture. The country became a part of diversified initiative directed on realization and implementation the commitments of the governments on ensuring transparency, empowering citizens, fighting against the corruption and usage of new technologies to strengthen the governance. The country updated its normative and legal acts, created a development strategy, wrote programs and applications. However, one of the most significant political events was the presidential elections, where S.Zheenbekov gained more votes and became the current president of the country. These elections were called «competitive» and «democratic.» We saw that two female candidates could not participate in the presidential elections. Nevertheless, I look forward with a hope and expectation for more women candidates for leadership positions and their opportunities to compete equally.

2017 was intensive and bright for the organization. The focus of the organization was to increase the capacity of staff and to promote a national mechanism that would help prevent discrimination. Our team has grown, but the heads of the departments have adequately coped with the incoming challenges associated with rapid growth. Along with internal challenges, we also fought with external ones. Thus, the constitutional changes that took place at the end of 2016 affected the whole of 2017. of the country officially has a discriminating feature that allows the state heteronormatively make decisions for people. The state is able now for whom marriage seems the most correct and suitable practice. To my great regret, this and some other amendments entered the Constitution of the country, unceremoniously institutionalized and established homo- and transphobia.

There are many challenges around which it is necessary and important to continue to counteract. That is why I am so proud of the team that acts harmoniously and inspirationally; the team that goes beyond their functional duties and working hours; the team with such a wide range of interest and willingness to learn and create. I am proud of Kyrgyz Indigo, which confidently and purposefully creates partnerships and enhances the visibility of LGBTI among organizations and state institutions, influencing the lives of the LGBTIQ community. Moreover, I am proud of my work due to which, a strategic vision of the distant is created, the team is growing and (since the establishment of the organization) there is no inter-project, ineffective period.

The organization has provided jobs for 27 people in the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic and 9 from the regions for 2017. According to the base rate, within the last year, we have provided for 140 pensioners. You can find out in this report our activities, event implementations and the impact of these actions.

The power of all of us can change the world. Join the partnership for the joint achievement of the equal and diverse world.

Daniyar Orsekov  
Executive Director of Kyrgyz Indigo

## **Opening remarks by the Chairmen of the Management Board and the Audit Commission**

During the reporting period, the Board continued its work with partially new membership. Our main concern is providing advice for the Kyrgyz Indigo team, but this year we also led and participated in fundraising. This period was marked by the fact that many large projects were written. The Board also contributed to the organization by establishing partnerships, ascertaining the position of the Board and determining the future tasks of the Board. The Management Board, in particular, assists in writing a fundraising strategy in the next reporting period.

Chairman of the Board,  
Nurbek Omurov

The Audit Commission, elected by the staff of the General Meeting of the Public Association - Kyrgyz Indigo (hereinafter - the Company), members of the Audit Commission of M. Erealiev and T. Bakytov, carried out an audit of the Company's financial, business, and project activities for the period from 2015 to 2017. Based on the audit results, the Company's activities were carried out within the framework of the current legislation and in accordance with the Company's Charter. The Commission confirms the reliability of the actual data in the annual report, the main results of the work and the compliance of the activities carried out by the Company in the reporting year with the current legislation. Violations of legislation during the financial, business, and project activities, as well as the established procedure for accounting and reporting, were not revealed. The financial statements of the projects are reflected in the financial and administrative reports. In accordance with the above, the Commission recommends the report and conclusions to the general overview.

Chairman of the Audit Commission  
Maksat Eraliev

## About Kyrgyz Indigo

### WHO ARE WE

Public Association “Kyrgyz Indigo” - LGBTIA organization located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan is one of the largest LGBTI human rights organizations not only in Kyrgyzstan but also in Central Asia. The organization commits all efforts in the name of equal rights and improving the quality of life of LGBTI people. More than 30 LGBT activists and allies work with Kyrgyz Indigo, creating and implementing activities to protect rights, advocacy, and service provision.

Kyrgyz Indigo was established in 2009 as an initiative group of gays, bisexual men, and allies. In 2010 we registered as a community LGBT organization. The word «indigo» was chosen to reflect our ideology - harmony, unity, and equality among people. As one of the colors of the rainbow, it reflects the struggle for equality. It displays diversity and equality among people.

### Vision of the Kyrgyz Indigo:

A Kyrgyzstan, where all representatives of the LGBTIQ community are free to express their sexual orientation, gender identity and live in a safe space of diversity, equality, respect and positive recognition, which is essential for complete spiritual, intellectual and physical development.

### Mission of Kyrgyz Indigo:

Create a tolerant and prejudice-free, stigma-free outlook towards LGBTIQ people, and improve the quality of life of LGBTIQ people through comprehensive programs on human rights, information and visibility, develop the potential of the organization and the community, and build partnership and solidarity with other organizations.

### Our values:

Equal rights - LGBTIQ people have universal human rights and freedoms

Solidarity - the organization promotes the principle of solidarity within the LGBTIAQ community, with similar organizations and initiatives

Respect - the organization promotes the principle of respect for the community, other groups and communities, organizations and their activities

Responsibility - the organization and employees should be responsive to the goals that it sets to achieve them

Transparency - the organization is open to financial reporting and is accountable to communities

Commitment - employees committed to the mission and principles of the organization

Cohesion - the organization is cohesive inside and has a team spirit when employees are based on the principles of respect and trust to each other

### WHAT ARE WE DOING

We are forming a democratic society advocating for LGBTIAQ people's rights at the country and regional levels, protecting the rights and ensuring the security of LGBTIAQ people, creating alliances with the state and international organizations for non-discrimination and equality, creating a research database and promoting its expansion.

We are increasing the potential of all LGBTIAQ communities, including those who live and work in the regions, those who live with HIV, those who identify themselves as Muslims, those who are parents, brothers and sisters of LGBTIQ people.



We develop the organization by systematically investing resources in employees, volunteers, and trainees, developing alternative fundraising, and creating a long-term and effective partnership

Transparency and accountability, environmental friendliness, and feminism are important for us.

For the organization its people are important.

1 community center 1 shelter 21 employees 3 medical specialists



Kyrgyz Indigo team, Bishkek, 2017

## FORMATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The advocacy and partnership department employs 5 people.

The goal of the department for the year 2017 was to achieve equal access to the realization of rights for representatives of LGBTIQ communities, and to achieve non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Activities are aimed both at long-term processes in the context of promoting non-discriminatory and sensitive initiatives towards LGBTIQ people, as well as in response to single instances of violence, stigma, and discrimination against LGBTIQ communities.

The department's activities were divided into the following areas:

- The promotion of the national mechanism for the prevention of discrimination;
  - Rapid Response Group (RRG);
- Advocacy for access to HIV-related services in Kyrgyzstan;
- Involvement of representatives and community representatives in the advocacy process;
  - Partnership;
- Working with the media, media component;
  - Studies, reports.

### Promotion of the national mechanism for the prevention of discrimination (Equality Act)

In the Kyrgyz Republic there is no comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would include sexual orientation and gender identity as a qualifying feature. In 2017, the Coalition for Equality in Kyrgyzstan, the Soros office and the Kyrgyz Indigo have been systematically working on a draft anti-discrimination law. Kyrgyz Indigo was supported by MSMGF organization.

This bill is a unique tool that will help to protect the rights of everyone who is discriminated against on a certain basis.

As a result, we created a finalized draft of a law, achieved adherent deputies, built social platforms to discuss the issues of non-discrimination of vulnerable groups, and worked with the media to correctly sanction cases of discrimination of vulnerable groups. Being the first in the region to do so, KI received technical support from the Human Rights Campaign to promote the draft law on equality.

### Rapid Response Group

Since 2013, the Rapid Response Group (RRG) operates as a core function of our organization. Its main task is to react immediately to cases of violence and discrimination against LGBT people.

The RRG is a unique phenomenon for the EECA region. It is comprised of people from the community and allies who respond almost instantly to a request for help.

RRG statistics for 2017:

Number of recourse - **91**

Number of documented cases - **59**

Visits to places of crisis situations - **35**

Number of RRG consultations - **37**

Solving the issue with the participation of lawyers - **15**

Number of written applications - **3**

Number of case files - **1**.

Out of the documented cases - 39 cis-men, 4 cis-women, 16 trans-women

### Advocacy for access to HIV-related services in Kyrgyzstan

Within the framework of the «Right to Health» and «Partnership for HIV» program from the Eurasian Coalition for Men's Health and ECUO, our team created a national advocacy plan for 2018-2019 to overcome barriers to MSM / LGBT people in access to services in communication with HIV in the Kyrgyz Republic. The plan is written with the participation of community representatives and leading HIV experts and covers all aspects: from the state social order, to overcoming legal barriers and cultivating the community's advocacy potential.

#### Involvement of representatives and community representatives in the advocacy process

Throughout the year, the organization carried out activities aimed at cultivating the general potential of LGBTIQ communities in the country, where, along with other activities, we began to implement advocacy trainings focused on training and consistently involving communities in decision-making processes. An example of this is when representatives of the communities took an active part in the training on legal literacy from ECOM.

We asked our volunteers what experiences they had in this training.

*«I liked the topic of appealing to international human rights institutions: within the framework of reporting on conventions, in the universal periodic report and special rapporteurs. I would be happy to take part in the preparation of such reports. «*

Nurbek O.  
35 years

The volunteer who is actively involved in the life of the organization and the current board member



We believe that, thanks to the contributions of LGBT organizations towards representatives of the community, the number of activists will increase in the country. This is an important goal on the path towards achieving KI's life mission of equality in the Kyrgyz Republic.

## Partnership

As part of the efforts to build a democratic society, we are a consortium member with the «Partner Network» and the Country Network of People Living with HIV, and are building effective dialogues with the state in the framework of public procurement, state social order, transition to state funding for aggrandizement of HIV and TB and training of key population groups on skills to engage in national processes and critical thinking.

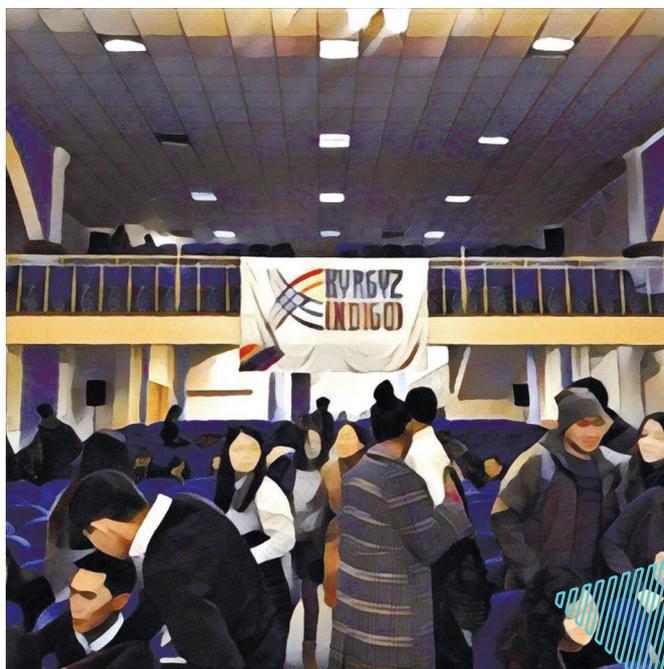
Beginning just as an idea, «Debate schools with key groups» were first realized by the AIDS East-West Foundation, and are systematically continued by us with our partners, including the IDEA CA. Here, key groups of the population are taught practical skills - basic arguments, public speaking skills, and of course critical thinking in general.

A significant advantage of the debating schools is the reduction of stigma and discrimination between the LGBT communities themselves, sex workers, people who use drugs, and people who live with HIV.

Another positive example of annual public statements on human rights are the «Dialogues on Human Rights.» The concept of the event is unique for Kyrgyzstan, as it creates an opportunity for socially active youth and representatives of different communities to get acquainted in detail with the current situation of discrimination, restriction of rights and promotion of human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Kyrgyz Indigo organizes annual youth debates tournaments, and in 2017 our team, together with IDEA CA, held a debating tournament - «Equality Cup 2017». The event was part of the global campaign «16 Days of Activism Against Violence.»

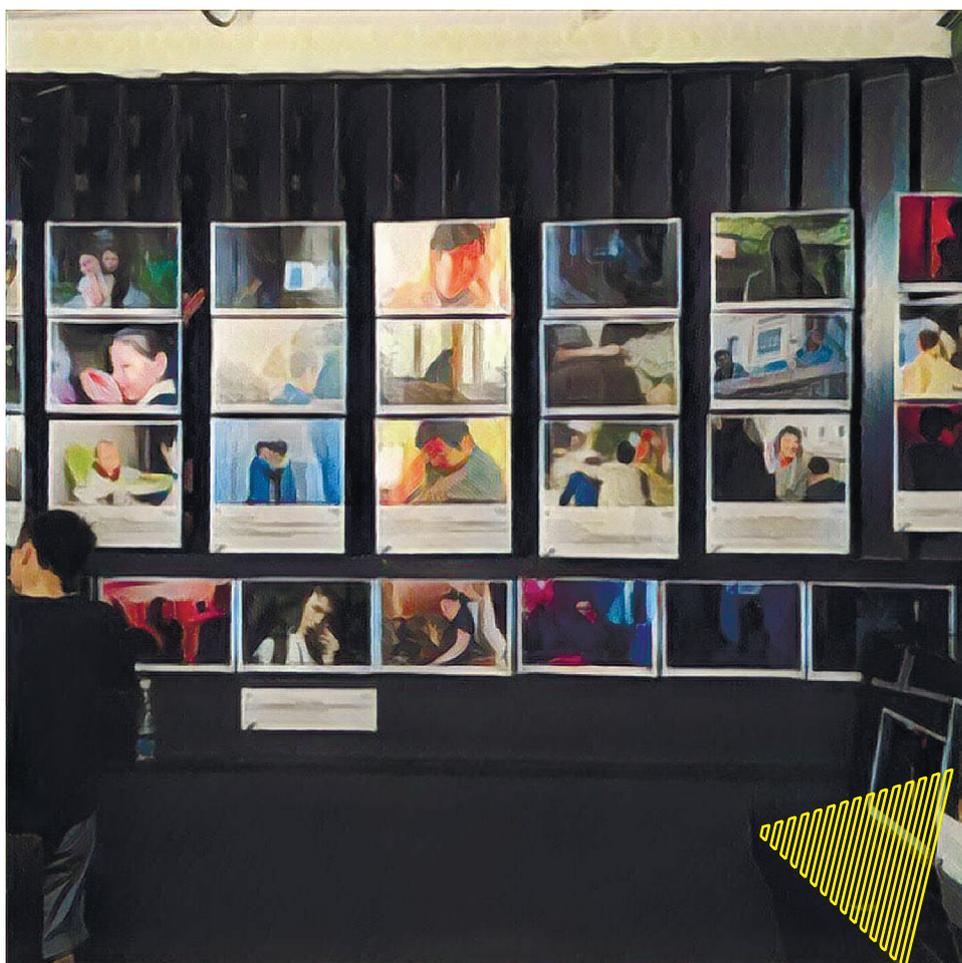
The importance of working with international mechanisms in promoting the rights of LGBTIQ people in the country is an integral part of advocacy. As part of our activities, KI works with



A public event organized at the university of the country

- ▶ UN committees to write alternative reports on the situation of LGBT people's rights in Kyrgyzstan;
- ▶ Local UN agencies in the context of HIV, STI, and SRHR;
- ▶ Human rights organizations (Human Rights Campaign, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, ADC Center Memorial, the OSCE / ODIHR) as well as other missions and human rights organizations.

During the reporting period, Kyrgyz Indigo wrote part of an alternative report on torture against LGBT people to the UN Committee Against Torture at the invitation of the human rights organization "Golos svobody." Unfortunately, the report was never submitted due to the fact that the country did not submit a timely report to the committee.

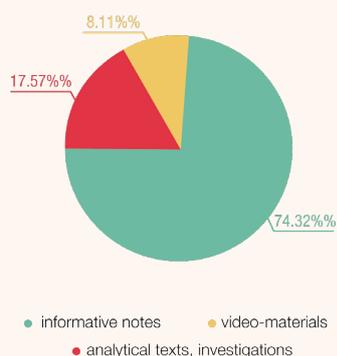


Exhibition on diverse families

## Work with the media. Media component

In the homo- and transphobic discourse of Kyrgyzstan, negative references to LGBTIQ people in the media are often accompanied by aggressive responses from users of social media networks, and sometimes this transforms into psychological and physical violence.

The results indicate that most of the materials are informational in nature, while analytical texts, including interviews and investigations, have been published much less. It can be assumed that LGBTIQ communities are attractive to the media in the context of crime and violence, but they do not engage in a comprehensive and in-depth study of sexuality and gender diversity issues.



### 1. Breakdown of materials by genre

As a part of the monitoring<sup>1</sup> of the media during the reporting period, 74 materials were recorded that had references or were fully devoted to LGBTIQ topics. Based on the calculations, the most frequently broadcast topic were discrimination and violence - 21 out of 74 materials were devoted to this topic. The table with breakdown of materials on certain topics shows that after violence and discrimination, the media wrote about LGBT people in the context of legislation and gender.

The year 2017 is remembered due to loud events that spread hatred against transgender people. The media often broadcast news about transgender girls, photographing / publishing their photos and videos, publicly revealing their identity and jeopardizing their physical security.



### 2. Breakdown of materials by topic

<sup>1</sup> Media monitoring activities were started in June, 2017. <http://indigo.kg/digest>

## Research

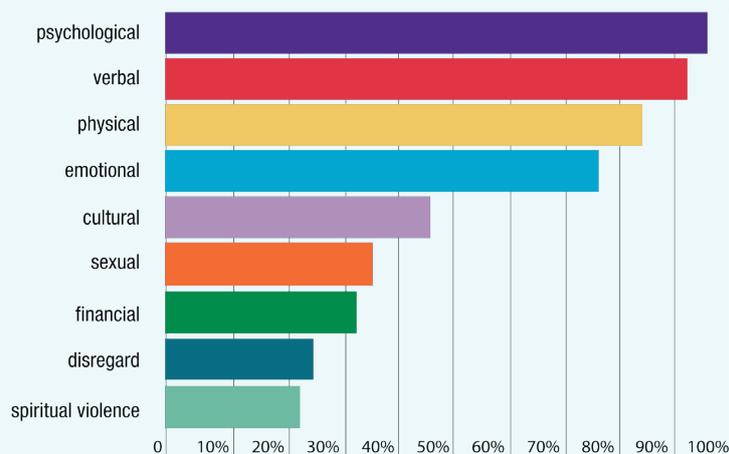
The past year has been productive in the context of collecting and processing strategic information on LGBT people's participation in the governmental processes, assessing the perception of the diversity of key social services, conducting a study on internal homophobia in terms of prevention programs, and violence against LGBT communities.

The study «LGBT in Kyrgyzstan: Violence and Discrimination<sup>2</sup>», aimed at describing hostility and violence against LGBT people. It showed a high level of violence and discrimination against LGBT communities. 88 people participated in this study.

Almost 96% of respondents said that they experienced psychological violence at least once in their life. More than 92% of respondents indicated verbal violence. A very large number of respondents were subjected to physical violence - 84%.

*«My friend, a close one at that time, first joked, suspecting of my sexual orientation, but once he suggested «fixing” the lesbian in me, I thought he was joking, but when he started to molest me it was already too late ...»*

Respondent of the study  
from the in-depth interview



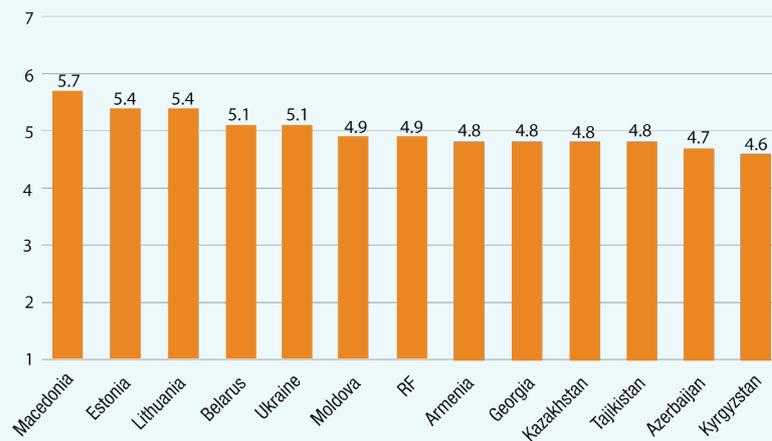
4. Types of violence experienced by respondents

### Study on internal homophobia

A study on internal homophobia<sup>3</sup> conducted in 2017 shows that Kyrgyz people are experiencing more internal conflicts than people living anywhere in the CIS countries. Figure 5 shows that the highest level of acceptance was 5.7, while the lowest was 4.6. From Kyrgyzstan, 181 gay, bisexual and transgender people participated. The main findings of the study were that a higher level of internal homophobia is associated with less coverage of services, HIV testing and access to services.

<sup>2</sup>«LGBT in Kyrgyzstan: Violence and Discrimination», NGO «Kyrgyz Indigo», 2016 Published in 2017.

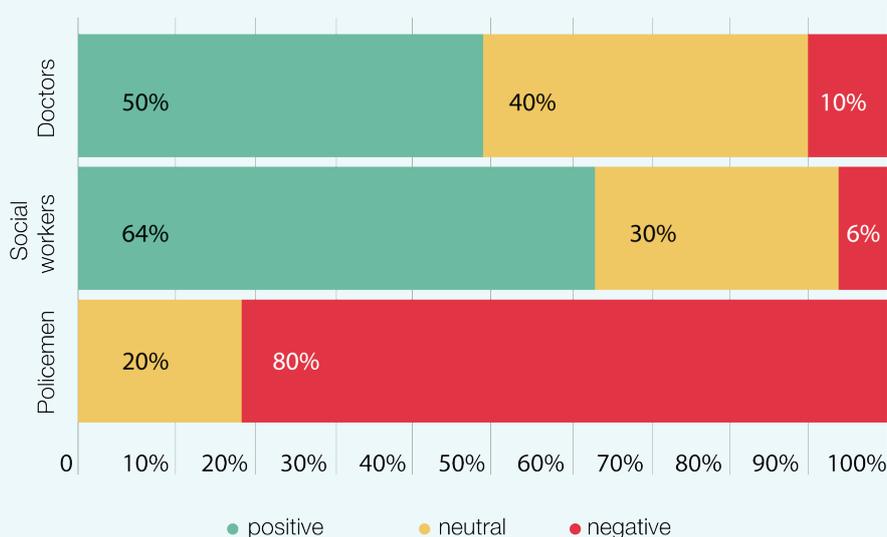
<sup>3</sup>«Internal homophobia in the CEECA countries and its relationship to access to MSM services», ECOM, 2017



### 5. Level of acceptance of respondents from the countries of CEECA

The study of the attitude towards LGBT among social workers, medical workers, and police officers of the Kyrgyz Republic was carried out in the second half of 2017.<sup>4</sup>

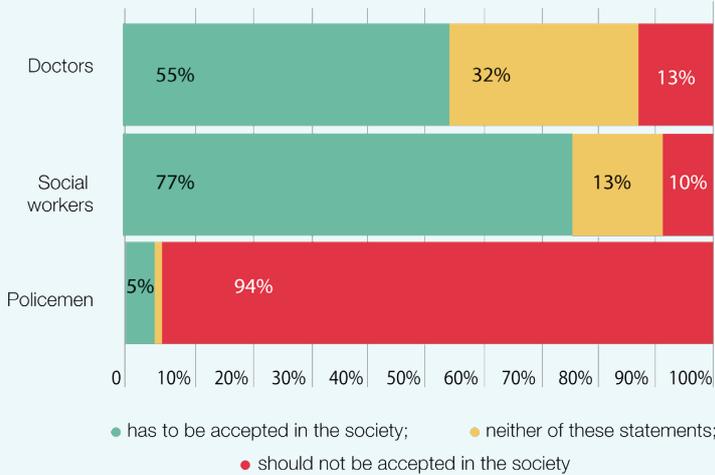
From Kyrgyzstan, 100 workers in the sphere of health, 69 social workers, and 80 police officers were interviewed. The total number of respondents from Kyrgyzstan was 249 people. This is the highest coverage rate among the five countries that were involved in the research.



### 6. Attitudes towards LGBT by employees of social services

<sup>4</sup> «Research of the attitude towards LGBT among employees of key social services of the five countries of Central, Eastern Europe and Central Asia», ECOM, 2017 - <http://indigo.kg/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Gate-keepers-attitudes-survey-ru.pdf>

The results of the research showed a predominantly positive attitude of the respondents. However, the policemen turned out to be an exception, they negatively regard the homosexuality as a phenomenon.



### Homosexuality and society

In general, the social distance of policemen from LGBT is distinctly traced in all points of the study.

Annual news release on the situation of LGBT people in Kyrgyzstan for 2017. On the basis of documented cases, socio-cultural, and political events on LGBT topics, we are releasing an analytical product that allows us to become more fully acquainted with the rights of LGBT people in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://indigo.kg/ezhegodnyie-nyus-relizyi-o-situatsii-lgbt-v-kyrgyzstane>

## COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

There are 12 people working in the community empowerment department.

The goal of the department for 2017 was to increase the capacity and empowerment of LGBTIAQ people to improve the quality of life.

Activities are aimed both at long-term processes in the context of developing leadership, capacity in communities, and providing services; including isolated cases of providing social and psychological assistance.

The department's activities were divided into the following areas:

- Provision of a minimum package of services in the context of preventing HIV transmission;
- Activities on HIV at the national level;
  - Working with volunteers;
  - Parents' Club
  - Religion and sexuality;
- Migration of LGBT people and migrants
  - Investigations
- Providing a safe place: community center and shelter



Provision of a minimum package of services in the context of preventing HIV transmission

A minimum package of services was provided to 2,090 people in the framework of the Global Fund project «Effective control of tuberculosis and HIV infection in the Kyrgyz Republic» through UNDP. Each of them received condoms and lubricants, and

an information session. Within the department, 870 people received psychological counseling. In total, 354 household services, including hot meals, were provided.



### HIV activities at the national level

In May 2017, an NGO forum was held where communities involved in HIV and tuberculosis prevention activities delegated their representatives to the Committee on HIV and Tuberculosis under the Coordination Council for Public Health under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The result of the forum was transparency and the openness of processes, the availability of information, the involvement of all LGBT community leaders, the opportunity to speak in a comfortable environment, and (for the first time in the history of the existence of the country coordinating mechanism) representation from communities as a member and an alternative from MSM / TG.

At the end of 2017, the annual national conference on MSM services and LGBTIAQ communities was held. The goal was to strengthen and consolidate MSM and TG communities in Kyrgyzstan, as well as establish effective cooperation of activists, organizations and experts to improve the access and quality of services in response to modern challenges. Within the framework of the conference, issues achieving the set country indicators for 2017, common challenges and problems in the implementation of prevention programs, as well as studies and discussions of joint activities were discussed.

### Work with volunteers

The Community Empowerment Section aims to increase the capacity of LGBT communities and their environment, and it is important to work with volunteers, parents, LGBT people living with HIV, queer Muslims, and others.

In 2017, 20 volunteers appeared, and a document on volunteerism was created and adopted. 10 active volunteers received certificates of appreciation and commemorative gifts for the «Volunteer’s Day.» Many volunteers are intellectually and professionally investing their resources in the organization, making a huge contribution to improving the quality of life of the community.



A well-known feminist of Kyrgyzstan voluntarily provides a session about feminism and its role

## Parents' Club

Our active work with the parents of LGBT representatives started on June 1, 2016. At the moment, we have 7 parents - five mothers and two fathers who visit, initiate, and gather at the «Parents' Club.» Working with parents is difficult, but fascinating. Thus, during the first half of the year several meetings with parents were held so that they could get to know each other better and trust the group. These meetings mainly discussed the relationship of parents with their children. Each parent told about the current stage of accepting their children. Parents participated in Coming-Out Day, the IDAHOBIT 2017 celebration, the international events in Kiev from the partner organization Tergo<sup>6</sup>, and the therapeutic training from the Odessa branch of "LIGA" at the annual ILGA Europe conference.

During parent meetings, they inspire each other, and even make their own coming-outs<sup>7</sup>. Now, thanks to the relentless emotional and resource support of KI, the Parents' Club is looking forward to expanding its activities.



Kyrgyzstani mothers and fathers of LGBT young people participate in International Training



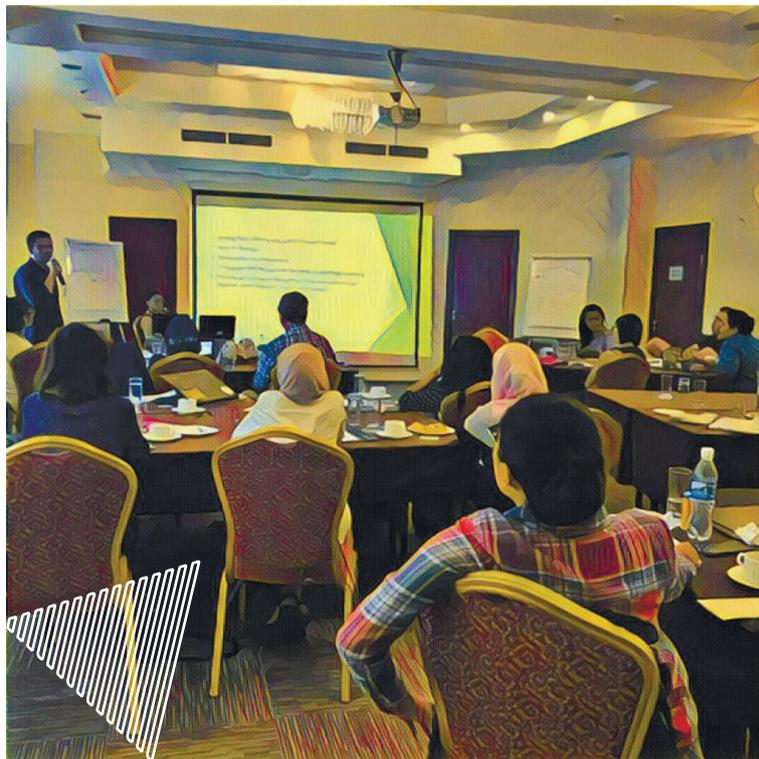
Viewers are waiting for the event to begin on IDAHOBIT 2017

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/tergouk/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/tergouk/videos/?ref=page_internal)

<sup>7</sup> <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/28495353.html>

## Religion and sexuality

Many of us come from patriarchal and conservative cultures that constantly limit our freedom of sexual and gender expression. This is especially true in the post-Soviet countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, where the religious majority constitutes a Muslim society. The radicalization of Islam and the critical-principled position of orthodox Islam in relation to the LGBT community, the lack of inclusive literature in Russian or in native languages on this topic, the lack of LGBT religious leaders, the fear of discussing the topic of faith and religion in LGBT communities, and the lack of progressive and inclusive religious groups in the post-Soviet space all make Queer Muslims vulnerable. It leaves no hope for a harmonious life where one can freely express both one's own self and faith.



Presentation for participants at one of the trainings

The above actions or inactions create tremendous pressure for Queer Muslims from religion. They find themselves in a state of disharmony between their two important identities, making them feel alienated from Islam. This situation can cause an enormous disillusionment with Islam, causing them to leave religion behind.

Due to the current situation, it became necessary to start working with Queer Muslims to reconcile their faith and SOGI. Thus, since 2015, three-day trainings in small groups for Queer Muslims are periodically held. In these trainings the questions of inclusive Islam are considered, as well as what the Quran says about sexual and gender diversity. At the moment, such trainings have been held for more than 30 people. In the future, it has been planned to conduct similar trainings in other Central Asian countries.

## Migration of LGBT people and migrants

For modern Kyrgyzstan, as well as other Central Asian countries, migration has become a major challenge. In Kyrgyzstan, there is a general trend of both internal and external migration both for employment and for getting a higher education. LGBT representatives also migrate to feel freedom and to avoid psychological oppression or cultural violence - forced marriage, and to free themselves from financial dependence on relatives. In connection with the manifestations of homo-transphobia or the feeling that they will soon be exposed to them, LGBT people can migrate, being not ready, for example, with chronic diseases, low financial and mental readiness.

The main countries that the LGBT community decide to migrate are the Russian Federation, Turkey, South Korea, Kazakhstan, and the United Arab Emirates. It turns out only a small part leave for the USA and Europe. At the moment, no studies have been conducted on LGBT migration. However, according to the observations of the organization, most of the community's LGB prefer a place of work in Turkey, transmen in South Korea, and transwomen in Russia, where sex work can be the main source of earning.

Due to the fact that LGBT people from Russia experience cases of violence and police abuse, Kyrgyz Indigo began searching for organizations that provide service and assistance to migrants from Central Asia. At the moment, there are contacts of Russian organizations, such as an initiative group for the support of the LGBT community «Maximum» in Murmansk, the Russian LGBT Network and others.

However, the process is mutual, so, with shocking news about the situation of LGBT people in Chechnya, Kyrgyz Indigo was ready to support people through their own shelter.

## Research

As a part of the activities of the department, Kyrgyz Indigo conducted a study to assess the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people<sup>8</sup> together with LGBTIAQ organization - Labrys. This work was aimed at a holistic identification of the needs of the LGBT community of Bishkek in social, legal, psychological and political settings, and in the field of health.

In the framework of the research, it included 12 in-depth interviews with the representatives of LGBT organizations and initiative groups and 295 questionnaires. The study was conducted within the framework of the international program «Bridging the Gaps: Health and Rights of Key Population,» supported by the COC Netherlands.

### Presentation of LGBT / MSM research

Kyrgyz Indigo conducted a presentation of LGBT / MSM research for the last 3 years for 40 sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists of Bishkek, together with the Department of Sociology of AUCA. This was an important event, since it informed about existing research on LGBTI and MSM, while also teaching the importance of an equitable approach when communities are actively involved in the development, design, implementation and reporting of a study.

<sup>8</sup> <http://indigo.kg/otchet-ob-otsenke-potrebnoy-lesbiyanok-geev-bisekualov-ok-i-kvir-goroda-bishkek-za-2016-god.html>

## Providing a safe place: community center and shelter

In 2017, there were 26 Saturday sessions in the community center, attended by 305 people. Sessions were conducted by invited experts, volunteers and employees of the organization. The sessions were held on various topics such as the reduction of internal homophobia, self-stigmatization, acceptance of oneself, the diversity and inclusiveness of LGBT people, oratory, the session «I am a Message» for the ability to learn how to pronounce your desires, the correct wording to say what you like and not. Under a partnership agreement with the Red Crescent, in a series of first aid sessions participants mastered the skills of first-aid in various situations.

The Saturday sessions in the community center are an effective tool for mobilizing the LGBTIQ community, where participants discuss common problems and look for solutions and answers, and people find like-minded people, which helps to build mutual trust and mutual support.



Drawing of an inhabitant of the shelter for the IDAHOBIT



## Shelter



Drawing of an inhabitant of the shelter

On December 26, 2016, the Shelter's doors were opened. The Shelter is a place where people from the community can get help and a safe place for temporary housing. The Shelter can simultaneously accept up to 12 people for temporary housing. Particularly, it was implemented for people who have lost their homes due to difficult life situations, providing them with hot meals and management case services.

In 2017, assistance was provided  
and support for **314** LGBT people.



The visit of international activists to the Shelter

In the course of the manager's case, people who come to the shelter express their needs, which the organization offers available services for support. The services can include documentation of cases of violence or discrimination by peers, legal advice and support in legal proceedings, social and psychological services, rapid HIV testing through a peer-to-peer program, and referrals to friendly organizations or clinics for other services.

The Shelter functions thanks to projects supported by the Global Fund through UNDP in Kyrgyzstan and ECOM. Because of the co-financing, the project is open not only for MSM (which previously excluded transgender women), but also for LGBT people in general.

The main difficulties that LGBT people bring to the shelter are connected with the family. These are questions of psychological, physical, economic and cultural violence. When people are made to feel wrong and insignificant, beaten, threatened to be beaten, trapped at home or, vice versa, kicked out of home, or when they experience financial blackmail, including refusal to pay for a university, or plan to forcibly get married, they come to the shelter.

Along with violence from the family, there are cases of severe beating, harassment, blackmail from strangers and law enforcement officers, after which LGBT people also come to the shelter for temporary housing.

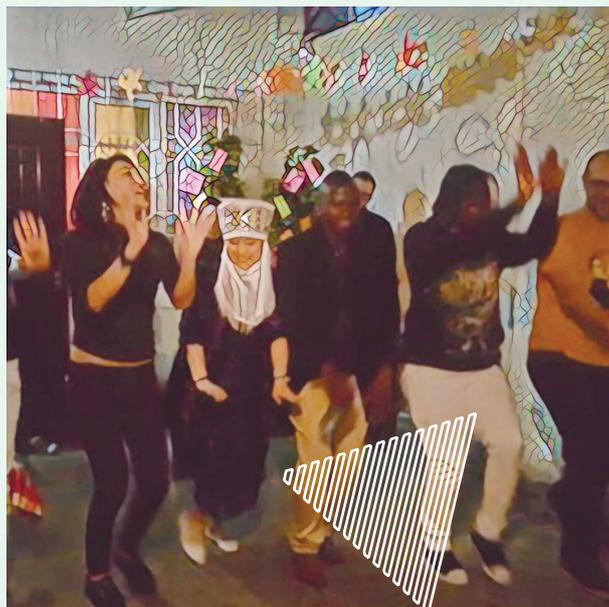
Several times a month in the shelter, information mini-sessions are held on topics

that are of interest to the Shelter residents (women). According to residents (women), they learned a lot of new and useful information, for example, about feminism, infection and its prevention, and how to protect own rights, while not being a lawyer. They also received computer literacy and English skills. In the shelter there are sewing machines, where people sew different things for themselves, and there is a computer with Internet access for studying and job searching.



A resident of the shelter takes pictures during the event

Almost every person who has visited the shelter speaks about care and warmth, and also about the support that they feel. They say that here they feel as if they are at home. They make new friends and find a family. There are cases when activists grow out of the residents to become active volunteers of the organizations, developing their legal literacy and confidently declaring their citizenship.



Guests and residents of the Shelter dance the Kyrgyz dance, the "Kara Jorgo"

LGBT people without a home (temporarily or permanently) are at constant and greater risk of becoming victims of violence compared to other groups and communities. These risks include the poverty and the invisibility of the needs of LGBT people in society. That is why we are happy that there is a shelter where people can temporarily be in a safe space, meet friends, get services and be inspired by personal and activist achievements.



The Shelter team

## Stories

*«The Moldo said it was a sin, and that such as I am will burn in hell»*

Hello everyone, my name is Azamat.

I am writing you a letter, in which I want to tell my story about being outed and my first meeting with the Shelter.

It was the most usual day, I was returning home after work. When I was at home, it immediately became clear that the situation was bad at home. I immediately realized cold and frightening eyes looked in my direction. The fact is that an «anonymous person» told my mom about my sexual orientation, about what clubs I go to, and what kind of people I talk to.

My mom started the conversation, and she immediately made it clear that she knew everything about my personal life. She started screaming and humiliating me from the doorstep in front of all of my relatives. After her insulting words, her relatives joined in. I began to experience psychological and then physical violence. The invited Moldo joined in later... He said that it was a sin, and that such as I am will burn in hell. After experienced pressure from my relatives, I felt sick and hurt, and I locked

myself in the bathroom. What happened later, I hardly remember. I remember only that I took the blade and began to cut my veins. I was thinking about death and I wanted to die. However, I called my close friend, who began to dissuade me. Hearing my conversations, the relatives broke the door and dragged me out of the bathroom and started to scold me again, without even giving me the first aid. After all this hell, they kicked me out of the house, dropping my things from the balcony.

I did not know what to do. I was broken and depressed. Coming to, I remembered the existence of the Shelter and went there.

I came to the Shelter late at night. I was greeted by social workers with first aid, they sat with me all night. I could not sleep and was afraid that my relatives would come and kill me. Every movement and noise made me feel everything all over again.

Later, after taking sedatives, I began to recover and calm down.

The next day a psychologist came to me and talked to me. The psychological consultation and support of other people in the Shelter greatly helped me survive these difficult days.

After a while my life began to return to normal.

I did not communicate with my family and did not want this.

Now things are different. I am fine, smile and enjoy every day. Thanks to the Shelter, I found a new family, new friends and lived through those terrible days. After all this, I came to activism and I want to do everything for the development of the LGBT community of Kyrgyzstan because I do not want other guys to experience the same thing that I did.

Take care of yourself and your loved ones! All the best.

with love,  
Azamat Gentle  
Former resident of the shelter  
Current active volunteer organization  
Member of the general meeting of Kyrgyz Indigo

*«I climbed onto the roof of a nine-story building, and I said to myself:  
Farewell to this cruel world»*

It was an outing, an outing to all of Kyrgyzstan. Me and my friends were shot on video and shown in bad light on local TV channels. It spread across all social media networks as a virus.

At that time, I hated myself, I hated the whole world, I hated social media. They discussed and condemned me. That is when I realized how people are cruel. The most cruel creature on the planet. With this load I could not go on living, looking into the eyes of people, my relatives. After all this, I could not surely go home. How? How will I go on? At that time, I had only one thought - «death.»

I climbed onto the roof of a nine-story building, and said to myself, «Farewell to this cruel world.» I was not scared, I was not afraid of death. I did not care what people will say about my act.

Before jumping off, I decided to say goodbye to my sister and say how much I love her and say thank you for her warmth and support. I could not call her directly and say all this. I wrote a text with warm words and said goodbye. She immediately

realized that it was useless to call. She wrote a text in reply: - «Please do not do this, think about me. Do not leave me alone. You know, we lost our parents early. You have one single brother who supports me and gives me the strength to live on. I understand you, it's hard for you now, but please, think about me. Do not leave me.» After reading the text I loudly screamed and cried. I did not want to hurt her. I know what the loss of a loved one is. I did not want my sister to get these feelings, again. This is terribly painful. I wrote to my sister in return that I had changed my mind, and everything will be fine with me, and apologized for my hysteria and panic. She asked me to say where I was now, she wanted to take me. I said that everything is fine, do not worry, I'll go to my friend's house.

I knew about the existence of the Shelter from its opening. I'm very familiar with the collaborators. I called and said that I have nowhere to go. Since they were familiar with my situation and outing, they immediately responded and opened the Shelter's doors for me, and I was warmly met.

I came to the Shelter with a big wound in my soul. I was depressed, I did not have the strength, there was no reason to live any further. But thanks to this safe and clean space, thanks to the support of the employees and inhabitants of the Shelter, I found the strength to live on. The coordinator approached me and asked me to write a statement, and explained the rules of living in the shelter. I will never forget what she said to me: «As far as I know, you sometimes change clothes. You can do this in the shelter. You can dress up if you want. We do not prohibit this.» I was very happy about that, my eyes caught fire, I hugged her and said: «Thank you for giving people the opportunity to be themselves.» The platform where I started making the transition was the Shelter. I am and always will be grateful to this house because the final decision was made namely by me living here. Now I am in harmony with myself and with the world! Now I'm happy and I want to scream at the whole world about this. And I think my transition is quite successful

Different people with different problems come to our rainbow house. When a new person comes, we support him or her. We, the residents, perfectly understand each other with a half-word. The Shelter makes us much closer, people find friends, a brother, a sister and a big family here. And most importantly, great support, love, warmth and comfort. Many people leave the Shelter with reluctance. There are tears, joy, sincere words of gratitude. During my stay in the Shelter, I saw and see a professional approach from the part of the NGO, Kyrgyz Indigo, namely social workers and Shelter's coordinator. With responsible approach to the tasks, performing the work in a high-quality and on time. A distinctive feature of the Shelter's collaborators is building partnerships between employees and residents of Shelter, which I think is very important for us, the residents.

I do not know what would happen to me and to the other Shelter residents if there was not one. I am grateful to the organization Kyrgyz Indigo for their work, for their professionalism, for working and trying to cover the needs of the LGBT community in Kyrgyzstan. The Shelter project is necessary for our community, we badly need such help and support.

with love and respect,  
Kanykei kyzy  
Resident of the shelter  
Transactivist

## Working with gays, bisexual men and transgender people living with HIV

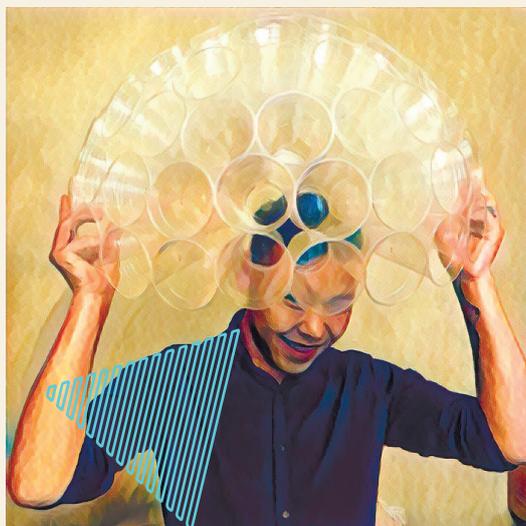


Participants of the therapeutic camp for people living with HIV

Work with people living with HIV was started by Kyrgyz Indigo in 2015 with the training of employees. With the support of the COC Netherlands, Kyrgyz Indigo organized a study visit to the countries of Eastern Europe - Russia and Ukraine - to train staff to work with LGBT / MSM living with HIV in the «Bridging the Gaps» project.

The group of mutual-assistance between gays, bisexual men and transgender people living with HIV has continually operated on an equal footing every Sunday at the Kyrgyz Indigo office from 2015 to this day. For 3 years the group has managed to develop a commitment to antiretroviral therapy among participants, and many develop a harmonious life with HIV, improve the quality of life from reducing fear and stigma towards the virus, and grow awareness.

In November 2017, the first in Kyrgyzstan therapeutic camp for GBT living with



The process of creating an immunodeficiency virus from used plastic cups during the event preparation

HIV was attended by children from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, supported by GNP +. The camp inspired many people. They were convinced of the importance of adherence to therapy, some believed in the possibility of building a family, many decided what personal quality of life and personal harmony with the world around meant for them.

### Story

«A life in which there is Love, to which my status does not affect»

It all started in 2015, when I was diagnosed with the HIV infection. Although at that time it was hard to say that something had begun ... on the contrary, it seemed that everything was over.

The life that I loved more than anything in the world... The fear of having someone close, and a lot more than that, I put on myself that year. But I could not even experience fear and pity towards myself. The first «peer-to-peer» meetings began to take place when I did not think that we could help each other to accept our statuses or try to change something.

Over the past 3 years, everything has changed so much that it's time to write an adventure romance. But the fact remains that today my friends and I are supporting PLHIV at the professional level, as well as the Kyrgyz Indigo organization which always supports people living with HIV, whose main goal is to create and implement programs aimed at improving the quality of life of people with positive HIV status i.e. to improve my life, my friends, those whom I would never have known if I not learned about my positive test result.

I do not write about the fact that I'm glad that I have HIV, it would be untrue. But I write that a person who has encountered this problem can change not only the course of his illness, but also his life. As life has changed in me, in which there is Love, which my status does not affect. I want to say thank you to many people for supporting me and supporting me day after day.

Aslan,  
26 years,  
Participant in the self-help group for GBT living with HIV

## Resource support for LGBT initiative groups in Kyrgyzstan

Throughout the 2017, Kyrgyz Indigo, as a resource center, dynamically supported and provided various opportunities for the development of initiative groups 'Yug-Antelope' and Kyrgyz Indigo Talas. From the side of Kyrgyz Indigo, many activities were completed, such as:

Operational support, when the representatives of the KI together with the members of the initiative groups updated the strategic plans of 'Yug-Antelope' and KIT;

Expanded and strengthened the partnership network by visiting local medical specialists in the context of SRH in conjunction with UNFPA, which increased the friendliness and awareness of service providers such as gynecologist, urologist, proctologist, endocrinologist, and surgeon;

Systematically supported the potential of IG leaders through participation in country, regional and international events;

Informing and educating communities through trainings on sexual and reproductive health, advocacy, psychological, medical, legal assistance, and fundraising to build skills in attracting resources to achieve the goals of initiative groups.



Supporting each other. KI's teambuilding

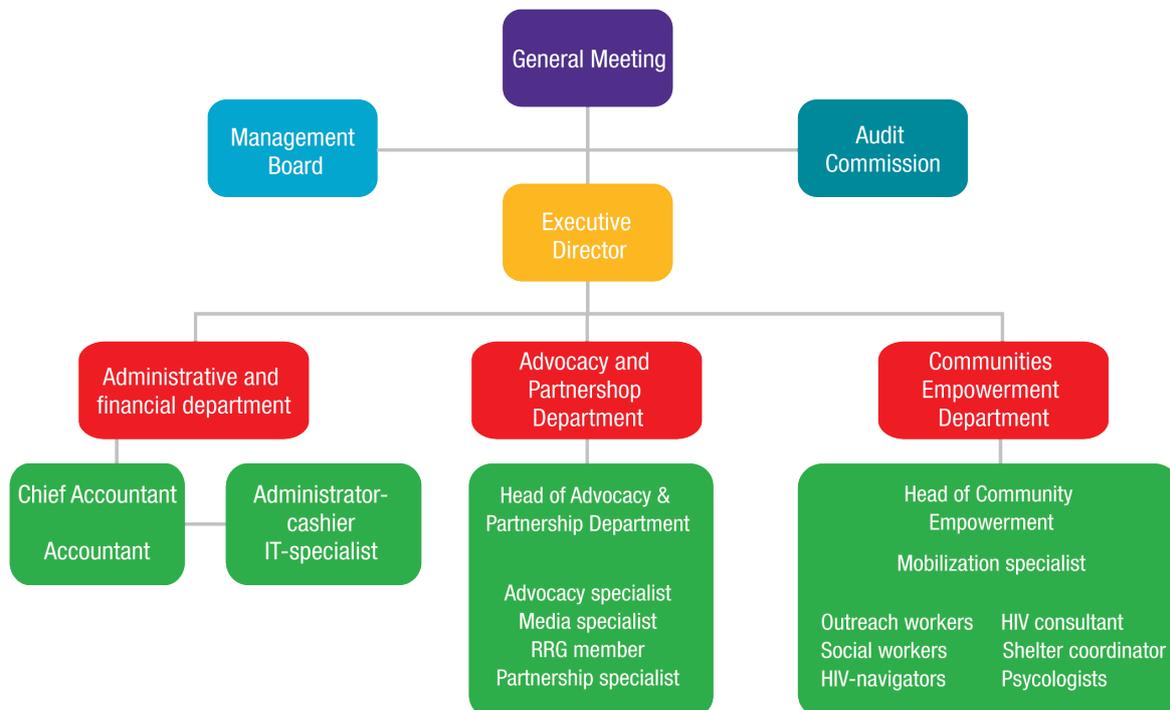
## ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

In 2017, the organization's message was chosen, which reflects the spirit of the organization - Queering the World. The message speaks about what we are striving for - improving the quality of life of LGBTIQ people including increasing the visibility of diversity around.

The organization constantly increases its potential, strives for quality monitoring and evaluation of its activities, invests resources in people and fosters organizational memory.

In 2017, 2 meetings of KI staff were traditionally held:

Team building at the beginning of the year and a working meeting at the end. As part of the teambuilding, the employees of the KI reviewed the organigram and updated the names of the departments.



At the working meeting at the end of the year, the KI team discussed the impact as a result of their actions. The changes that took place set the future plans for 2018. During the year, 4 documents were created to regulate the internal processes of the organization. We decided to learn eco-friendliness<sup>9</sup> and include feminites in our speech.

<sup>9</sup> Developed by Kyrgyz Indigo memo «How to make the office green» for Kyrgyz non-governmental organizations: <http://indigo.kg/postroy-svoy-zeleniy-ofis.html>



Indigo team on a weekly work meeting

During the reporting period, the organization underwent an assessment of the organizational capacity and development provided by ECOM. The summary of the assessment says that the organization has passed the stage of initial development, and is at the stage of active development. Kyrgyz Indigo - can be considered as a strong and sustainable organization, where there are significant opportunities for development and capacity building.

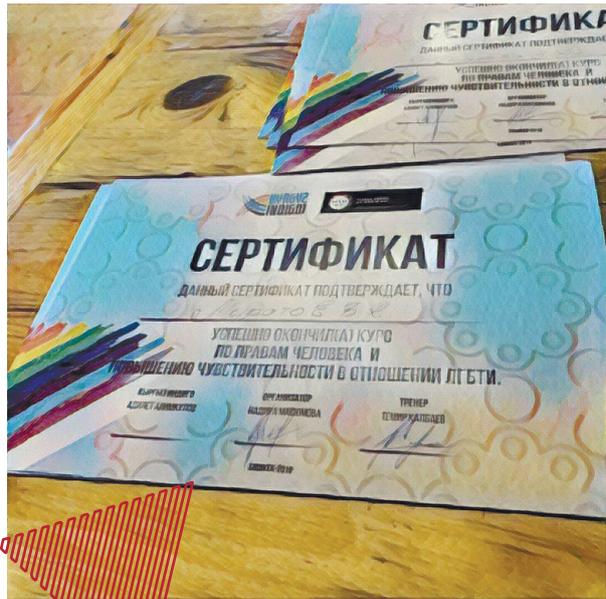
Strengths were marked by active development, experience in providing services to target groups, good organization of the Company both in the country and abroad, good grant history and partnership with donors, strong partnerships within and outside the country, and much more concerning employees, financial turnover and administrative and financial documentation, including reporting.

During the reporting period, the organization continued to support the initiative groups in two regions of the country as a resource center for **2** LGBT initiative groups. Kyrgyz Indigo is also a fiscal organization for Trans \* Coalition in the post-Soviet space and supports **4** projects.

Employees of the organization visited more than **30** training sessions / camps / conferences to increase capacity and discuss the challenges and achievements of LGBT people. Employees of the organization conducted **15** trainings for non-governmental, international and state structures, covering **121** people on various topics, including human rights and advocacy, sexual and reproductive health,

leadership training, diversity and gender. The people of the organization are its pride. We invest resources in people, because they are part of the community, they are representatives of the communities or allies.

We are strong trainers and experts in LGBTIAQ / MSM issues in Kyrgyzstan. We are employees who are constantly striving for professionalism, and we are friends who are sincere to each other.



KI's volunteers, staff and board member working together on LGBTI issues

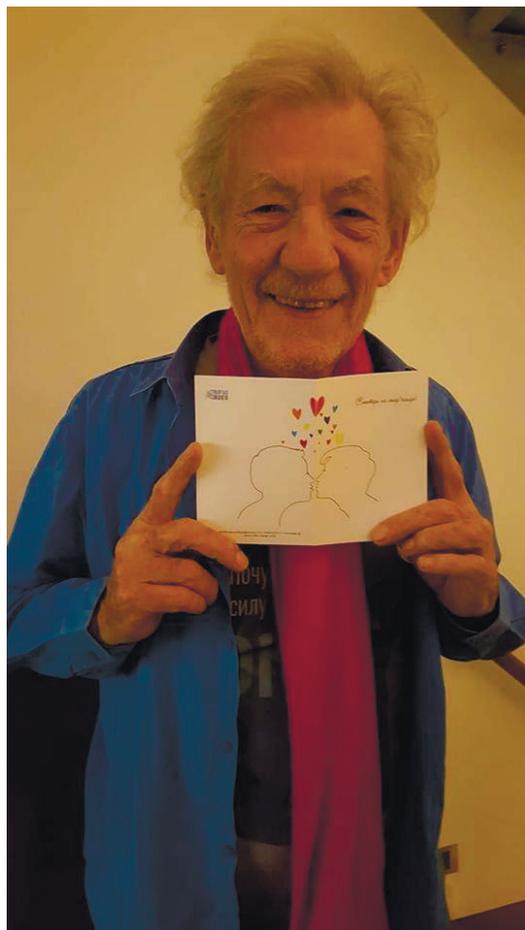
## PARTNERSHIP

One of the most important links in achieving these goals is effective partnership.

We value and respect all organizations, initiative groups, state and international structures that share our mission and values, interact with us on an ongoing basis, are involved in a partnership circle, and conduct activities.

Kyrgyz Indigo is also pleased that it was unanimously decided to be included in the LGBT organizations / initiatives of Central Asian countries in the European branch of the Association - ILGA Europe. This change is an indicator of the increasing mobilization and partnership of the Central Asian countries, including the strengthening of communication between them.

Thank you, dear partners, friends, donors and look forward to new joint achievements.



Sir Ian McKellen, the actor of British theater and film with Kyrgyz Indigo postcard during the «Stonewall» training program, where were representatives of the KI.



Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the KR



Republican AIDS Center



Kyrgyz State Medical Institute for Retraining and Advanced Studies



Coalition for Equality



Eurasian Coalition on Male Health

ECOM



GLOBAL NETWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

GNP+



ЕВРАЗИЙСКАЯ АССОЦИАЦИЯ СНОЖЕЖИЯ ВОДЕА

EHRA



COC Netherlands



MSMGF



IDEA CA



ILGA



AI-Fitrah Foundation



UNFPA



Peace Corps



ECUO



Freedom House



OHCHR

Kyrgyz Indigo Talas



OSF



AIDS Foundation East-West



Aids Fonds



Red Crescent



Sociology Department of AUCA



ISEDA





Amnesty



PSI



Rotaract club of Bishkek



Partner Network



Tergo



Yug-Antilope



Association Anti-AIDS



Interfaith Council Network



Golos svobody



Human Rights Campaign



Nazik Kyz



The Global Interfaith Network



Labrys



USA Embassy



AUCA



Country Network of PLWH



Azattyk media



Bishkek Debate Center



Listag

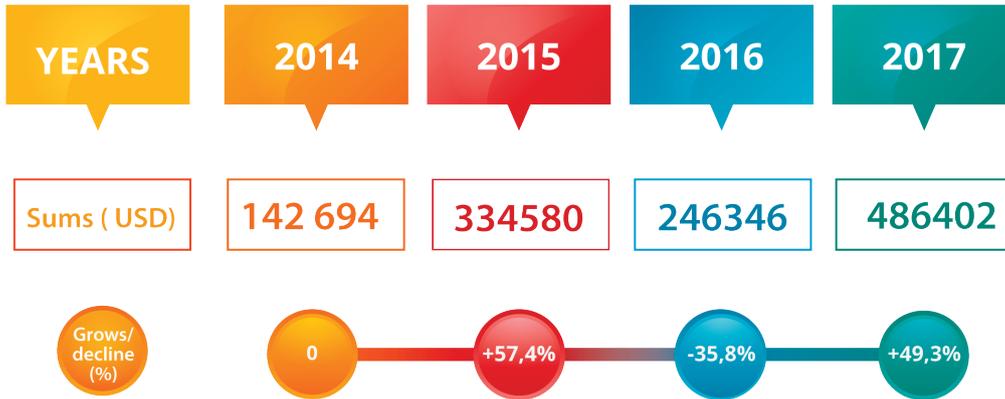
Special thanks to the remarkable expert allies:

Nurilya Mamatazizova  
Reina Arturova  
Begayim Akmatova  
Aisuluu Bolotbaeva  
Aikanysh Eralieva

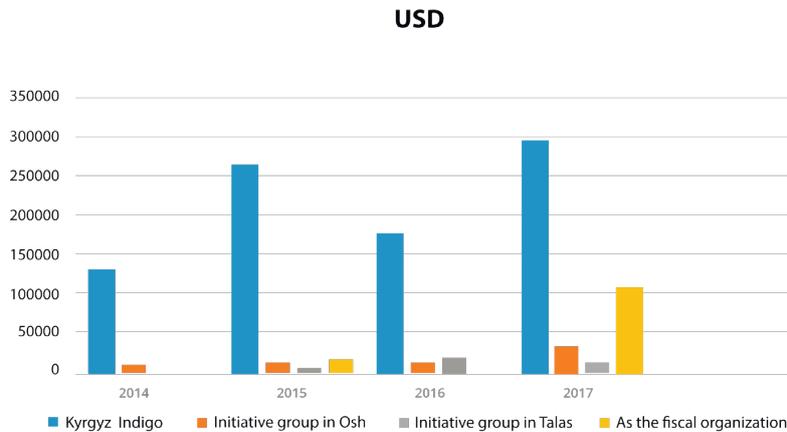
## Financial report

Growth / decline of financing (in %) compared to previous years

Note: the budget amounts of the fiscal organization and the Rainbow House project are included



The share of each project in total funding  
Analysis of financing growth



Rainbow House – savings



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ANNUAL REPORT of KYRGYZ INDIGO, 2017