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CITIES**

Bishkek Co-creation Workshop Report

Context Workshop



December 2023



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Acronyms

ARC	Asia Resilient Cities
JSI	JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
ME	Municipal Enterprise
NGO	nongovernmental organization
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Asia Resilient Cities

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Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Asia Resilient Cities (ARC) Project addresses cross-cutting urban development challenges in secondary cities in Asia by promoting sustainable urban growth; supporting resilient, low-carbon urban infrastructure; and integrating climate change and environmentally conscious approaches. ARC partners with cities to create more resilient and livable environments in the face of shocks. ARC will collaborate with residents to set the city agenda, strengthen the economy, and advocate for community needs. In addition, ARC will cultivate human resources in city government, the business community, other donor projects, and civil society.

In Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, ARC is implemented by JSI and works with the Bishkek City Mayor's Office to support the city's resilience goals.

ARC uses systems thinking approaches to understand the various complex challenges and opportunities in Bishkek. The project engages a diverse group of city stakeholders and government officials to become systems thinkers in order to jointly create potential activities for system strengthening and resilience building. One tool ARC uses is a [system map](#), which serves as a visual backbone of the project because it depicts connections between different perspectives, behaviors, and structures that form the city system. ARC facilitates a series of workshops to jointly develop, or "co-create," the system map. The first Context Workshop identifies the issues and opportunities on the way to achieving city goals. Next, a series of community activities and expert discussions ensure that voices from marginalized communities and expert entities are incorporated into the system map. Additional workshops further build the system map by identifying the areas with the greatest potential for improvement. The completed system map then guides ARC and city stakeholders to define a road map for Bishkek to promote resilient and sustainable urban development.

This report summarizes the content and outcomes of the first Bishkek co-creation workshop, the Context Workshop. It was held on December 13-14, 2023 and brought together a diverse range of stakeholders from the Bishkek Mayor's Office, government offices, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, the private sector, and other donor funded projects.

Workshop Design

The Context Workshop was designed based on principles of participatory action research and systemic strategy design. Key stakeholders across sectors were engaged and asked to contribute their unique knowledge and experience. The facilitators employed multiple modalities to gather data in order to develop a system map, as well as the necessary knowledge and skills that ensured the analysis was useful to the core team and primary stakeholders. These modalities included:

- Information sharing and instruction in plenary.
- Group activities and data collection to understand the context of the city.
- Participant presentation to the larger group.

Objectives

The objectives of this workshop were to:

- Create a common goal for the city (Bishkek) and document the unique context.
- Create a system map, which will provide a visual backbone for the approach.

Expected Outputs

The expected output of the workshop was an understanding of the context of the city, existing obstacles, and potential opportunities, developed into feedback loops to create a system map which will ultimately inform ARC Bishkek objectives for the next four years.

Workshop Summary

The detailed workshop agenda is provided in Annex 1. There were 45 participants from various sectors. Participant details are available in Annex 2.

Day 1 Sessions & Outcomes

Formal Opening

Kanybek Konokbaev (City Manager, ARC) delivered the welcome speech. He welcomed Mirlanbek Baigonchokov, the First Deputy Mayor of Bishkek, Mr. James G. Lykos, Director, USAID Economic Development Office, and other workshop participants.

Welcome Speeches

Mr. Mirlanbek Baigonchokov (First Deputy Mayor of Bishkek) expressed gratitude and welcomed the workshop participants, acknowledging the project's initiation with the Bishkek City Mayor's Office, USAID, and JSI in June 2023. He briefly mentioned that ARC focuses on comprehensive challenges in Asian cities, including Bishkek, targeting sustainable and low-carbon development, municipal infrastructure improvement, and climate change mitigation. He stated that the project is aligned with the goals of the Mayor's Office and its climate commitments. He extended appreciation to USAID, especially Mr. James G. Lykos, for their support in launching this project. The workshop's objectives were outlined, emphasizing cooperation for a green economy and urban development. The vital role of civil society in achieving these goals was recognized. Mr. Baigonchokov concluded with thanks to the participants and an expression of optimism for collaborative solutions to enhance the city's development.

Mr. James G. Lykos (Director, Economic Development Office, USAID Kyrgyz Republic) welcomed Mr. Baigonchokov and the participants of the workshop. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of sustainable urban growth in enhancing the quality of life for both current and future residents of Bishkek. He emphasized the collaborative efforts with the Mayor's Office and city stakeholders, aiming to improve municipal services across various sectors and ensuring equitable and accessible benefits for all residents. He acknowledged the challenge of climate change in Bishkek, which impacts air and water quality as well as temperature extremes, and stated that ARC's strategy includes providing training and data tools to empower the Mayor's



Mr. Mirlanbek Baigonchokov, First Deputy Mayor of Bishkek (right) and Mr. James G. Lykos, Director, Economic Development Office, USAID Kyrgyz Republic (left) participate in welcome speeches.
Photos: JSI

Office in addressing these environmental challenges. He described the partnership as a collaborative and shared vision for a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Bishkek. He emphasized a collective commitment to a better future for the city.

Introducing ARC

Amanda Pomeroy-Stevens (ARC Project Director) welcomed attendees via a recorded video and acknowledged the Bishkek City Mayor's Office, sectoral government departments, academia, donor partners, civil society, and other stakeholders. She noted that attendee's inputs are so important to ensure Bishkek is better prepared to face shocks, disasters, and other uncertainty that climate change will bring. ARC has four years to complete the activities that come out of this work planning process, and will hopefully successfully partner with many attendees to co-implement some of the activities.

Damodar Bachani (Deputy Director, ARC) provided the overview of the project. He also highlighted urbanization and the global trend of rural to urban migration; he emphasized the increase in urban population since 1913, noting that 57 percent of the world's population now lives in cities, a number expected to rise to 70 percent in the next few decades. He mentioned shocks and stresses that Bishkek faces such as poor air quality, water shortages during summer, and public infrastructure such as roads. The purpose of the workshop is to build a work plan that supports Bishkek City's resilience goals for the next four years. A similar model was tested during the USAID-funded Building Healthy Cities project.

System Thinking Approach

This session was conducted by **Abbie Condie** (ARC Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Qualitative Advisor) and **Alsa Bakhtawar** (ARC Regional Facilitator). At the beginning

of this session, all the participants introduced themselves. Then they were asked to prioritize different aspects of resilience on the page provided on their respective tables, with one denoting the most important, and five the least important. The notetakers collected the results of this ranking exercise.

Next, Ms. Bakhtawar provided an introduction to system practice. She then asked the participants to describe the meaning of resilience. People explained resiliency in many ways according to their understanding and expertise. But the majority of them agreed that “to achieve resiliency for the city it requires proper planning and coordination from different sectors.”

Ms. Bakhtawar mentioned that the city is a complex system as it includes different sub-systems. She broadly explained the different types of problems that a city can face. She then further discussed why we require a system approach for permanent solutions rather than focusing on temporary problems. She also showed an example of a dynamic system map.

Guiding Stars

In this session, the participants were asked how they wanted to see Bishkek City after 10-15 years. They were asked to think broadly by including gender, marginalized populations, and persons with disabilities. The participants wrote down their answers and stuck them on the board.

Enablers and Inhibitors, and Prioritizing Themes

Next, the participants were asked to identify the enablers and inhibitors that can work as a support factor or barrier, respectively, to achieving the guiding stars. Following the previous method, the participants again wrote down their answers and stuck the enablers and inhibitors on the board. Through thematic analysis, Ms. Bakhtawar and Ms. Condie sorted the enablers and inhibitors into categories. Participants were asked to vote for the six thematic categories (enablers and/or inhibitors) which they thought were most important to consider in preparing the system map. Table 1 shows the results of the voting.



Participant guiding star statements envisioning a more resilient Bishkek.

Photo: JSI



Participants add enablers and inhibitors (left) and then review after the categorization exercise (right).
Photo: JSI

Table 1. List of Enablers and Inhibitors

Theme	Votes
Enablers	
Alternative energy	14
Financing and investment	13
Digitalization	13
Mindset change	12
Built infrastructure	11
Transparency	8
Natural resources management	6
Partnership	6
Citizen involvement	5
Inhibitors	
Governance environment	14
Lack of financial resources	11
Laws and policies	6
Human resources challenges	6
Lack of shared sociocultural norms and values	6
Lack of multisectoral collaboration	5
Poverty	4
Poor natural resources management	4
Poor education	4
Lack of awareness	4

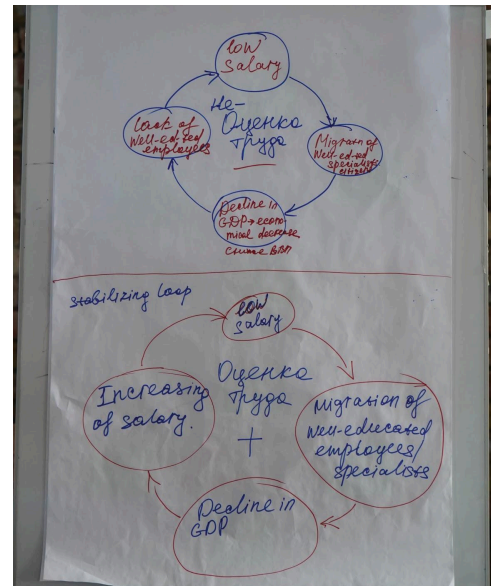
Cause and Effect

Then the participants were divided into groups and assigned a theme on which they were responsible for doing a cause-effect analysis on chart paper. Themes were decided based on the voting. The top eight were chosen for cause and effect analysis, one for each table of workshop participants. Participants were asked to fill in what was causing the theme and then move to the effects. This group exercise concluded day one of the workshop.

Day 2 Sessions & Outcomes

Feedback Loops

After a recap of day one of the workshop, participants were asked to prepare a feedback loop that has no more than four factors. Feedback loops are like a cycle of cause and effect, where the result of something happening affects that same thing, either making it stronger or trying to bring it back to a balanced state. It is like a loop that keeps repeating and influencing what happens next. There were a total of eight loops prepared by the eight groups based on their assigned theme. Participants came up with multiple feedback loops and presented the story of each loop to a larger group. The major feedback loops were created around the topics of energy, digitalization of public service, citizen mindsets, legislation, public finance, transparency in city administration decision-making, and city infrastructure. Participants spoke about how citizen's mindset and involvement play a crucial role in shaping living conditions in the city.



Feedback loop examples.

Photo: JSI

Closing

In the closing session, representatives of the Mayor's Office spoke about fruitful collaboration with ARC. Information was provided on how the data generated during the workshop would be used, and opportunities for continued engagement. Facilitators announced that the next workshop would be on February 15-16, 2024 and invited participants to join. Participants showed interest and engagement in the materials and a desire for an ongoing role in designing and implementing a work plan for Bishkek. Participants were thanked for their time and the valuable information that they provided, which is essential to the success of the project.

Way Forward

The two-day Context Workshop provided insights on the key themes essential for resilient urban development in Bishkek. These themes were further analyzed through the cause and effect analysis, backed up with participant's evidence-based insights and experiences to develop feedback loops. Moving forward, ARC will share these feedback loops with community groups, and further refine them by incorporating their distinctive and complementing perspectives. This in-depth understanding will enable ARC to design a system map for Bishkek.

Annex 1

Workshop Agenda

Day 1: 13 December 2023	
10:30-11:00 AM	Registration of participants & light refreshments
11:00-11:05 AM	Welcome and felicitation of the dignitaries on the dais
11:05-11:10 AM	Inaugural address by Mr. Mirlanbek Baigonchokov, First Deputy Mayor of Bishkek City
11:10-11:20 AM	Address by Mr James G. Lykos, Director, Economic Development Office, USAID Kyrgyz Republic
11:20-11:30 AM	Introduction of ARC Project by Dr. Damodar Bachani, Deputy Director, ARC and Amanda Pomeroy-Stevens, ARC Project Director recorded speech
11:30-11:40 AM	Vote of thanks and instructions for the next sessions
11:40-12:00 PM	Networking break
12:00-12:30 PM	Systems thinking: starting the journey together
12:30-1:00 PM	Systems thinking: guiding star
1:00-2:00 PM	Lunch break
2:00-3:00 PM	Group work: explore forces - identifying enablers and barriers
3:00-3:30 PM	Categorization of themes / stretch break
3:30-4:15 PM	Activity: prioritization of the themes for cause and effect analysis
4:15-4:30 PM	Concluding remarks and next steps
Day 2: 14 December 2023	
9:30-10:00 AM	Recap of day 1 & briefing of agenda for day 2
10:00-11:15 AM	Group work: cause and effect analysis of the identified themes
11:15-11:30 AM	Tea break
11:30 AM-1:00 PM	Group work: mapping the system - developing causal feedback loops
1:00-2:00 PM	Lunch break
2:00-3:30 PM	Presentation by groups
3:30-4:00 PM	Concluding session: consensus remarks, next steps under ARC

Annex 2

List of Participants

	Name	Positon	Organization
1	Abdyldaev Aidlan	Specialist	"Tazalyk" Municipal Enterprise (ME) under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
2	Abylmeyiz kyzy Indira	Lead Specialist	Mayor's Office
3	Aidaraliev Maamatkul	Director	NGO "Arysh"
4	Akmataliev Daniel	Specialist of the Production Department	ME "Bishkek ZelenHoz" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
5	Baigonchokov Mirlanbek	First Deputy Mayor	Mayor's Office
6	Baketaev Baygazy	IT Analyst	ME "Center of Digital Technologies" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
7	Balbakov Meken	Deputy Head Of Department	ME "Bishkekvodokanal" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
8	Beishenbaev Aman	Engineer	ME "BishkekTeploEnergo"
9	Bikieva Kayyrkul	Epidemiologist	Department of Prevention of Diseases and the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance under the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic
10	Bryzgalova Olga	Lead Specialist	Ministry of Education
11	Dinantinova Zinat	Specialist in Development of the State Language	ME "Bishkekvodkhoz" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
12	Dr. Koustubh Sharma	Director for Science and Conservation	Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan
13	Duysheev Azamat	Businessman	JIA Business Association
14	Zhusupova Aigerim	Head of Air Pollution Monitoring Department	Agency for Hydrometeorology under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic
15	Imanaliev Zhoomart	Technical Supervision and Design Specialist	Administration of Capital Construction under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
16	Ismailova Baktygul	Director of the Department of Social Development	Mayor's Office
17	Kudoyarova Gulkhanay	Head of the Organizational and Legal Department	ME "BishkekSvet" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
18	Kulumbetov Zhanybek	Expert on Energy Efficiency	Unison Groups
19	Kydyralieva Meerim	Chief Specialist	Department of International Cooperation and Protocol under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall

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20	Moldokulov Kurmanbek	Director	Bishkek City Development and Investment Agency under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
21	Nazarbayeva Mairamkan	Head of Strategic Planning	Ministry of Education
22	Petrova Victoria	Head of Exploration	UNDP Accelerator Lab
23	Rysbek uulu Zhumgalbek	Specialist of the Monitoring Department	Bishkek City Development and Investment Agency under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
24	Rysbekova Tumara	Manager	Public Foundation "Providing Legal Assistance to Persons With Disabilities"
25	Sakiev Nurlan	Deputy Head	ME "Bishkek Sanitary Landfill" under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
26	Samybek uulu Atay	Consultant	ADB
27	Subanbekova Aidai	Lead specialist of the Monitoring Department	Bishkek City Development and Investment Agency under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
28	Sulaymanbekova Nurkiz	FAST USAID Project Coordinator	DevTech Systems
29	Sultankulova Asel	Head of the Department of Public Procurement, Economic Planning and Investment Attraction	Department of Transport and Road Infrastructure Development under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
30	Toktorov Eldar	Head of Legal Department	Department of Individual Housing and City Planning under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
31	Tursunov Ilgiz	Manager	NGO "Students of Kyrgyzstan for a Green Economy"
32	Tynalieva Kamila	Head of the Monitoring Department	Bishkek City Development and Investment Agency under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
33	Tynybekov Akyikat	Businessman	JIA Business Association
34	Usupbekova Aida	Leading Specialist	Mayor's Office
35	Khazhieva Shakhnoza	Leading Specialist	Agency for Hydrometeorology under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic
36	Sharshenaliev Esenbek	Chief Specialist of the Control Department for the Sverdlovsk Rayon	Department of Land Use Control under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
37	Shkurdyuk Kristina	Lawyer	NGO Resource Center for the Elderly
38	Ennazarov Mirlan	Deputy Director of the Department of Urban Affairs	Bishkek City Hall

39	Ergeshov Rustam	Specialist of the Organizational and Personnel Department	Department of Physical Education and Sports, Tourism and Youth under the Central Office of Bishkek City Hall
40	Sharshenova Ainash	Professor	International Higher School of Medicine
41	Mamirova Aiperi	Specialist	Service on Energy Supervision under the Ministry of Energy of the Kyrgyz Republic
42	Beishenov Adilet	Notetaker	KPMG Bishkek LLC
43	Bektemirova Tursunai	Notetaker	NGO "Students of Kyrgyzstan for a Green Economy"
44	Hikita Sakura	Notetaker	Public Fund "Sustainable Development Initiatives"
45	Tsoi Danil	Notetaker	Public Fund "Sustainable Development Initiatives"

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