

On behalf of:



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# Support of German Minorities in Central Asia

## Creating bridges between cultures

### Context

The Programme “Support of National Minorities in Central Asia” has been implemented since 1993 in view of acknowledgment by Germany of responsibility for the consequences of the Second World War. Various activities of the Programme initially had a mission to improve the living conditions of the German minority and their neighbors, particularly in densely populated areas. Since 2007, a new emphasis has been made at stabilization and development of the German minority in Central Asia. Now the prospects of cultural and ethnic identity of the German ethnic group are the core of the policies being promoted, while creating in the group a sense of responsibility and ownership for public development in their countries of residence.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) has been operating the Programme in agreement with governments and regional administrations in countries of residence of ethnic Germans and with competent and legitimate representatives of the German minority in these countries. Today, about 240,000 Germans live in Central Asia, most of whom are in Kazakhstan (222,000 people).

Project name	Programme for National Minorities in Central Asia
Comissioned by	German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI)
Partners	Head associations of ethnic Germans
Project region	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan
Duration	Since 1993

### Aims

The Programme objective is that the German minority represents its interests independently in the country of residence, develops its ethno-cultural identity and actively pursues a bridging function between Germany and the country of residence.

The activities of the Programme are organized in a way to promote reinforcement of the German minority’s self-organization in the countries of residence, capacity building of Germans, strengthening of ties between generations, representation and embodiment of their ethno-cultural identity.

As a result, representatives of the German minority, using the German language and identifying themselves with their ethnic group, should be integrated in and play an active role in public life, both within their own organizations and in their countries of residence as a whole.



*Left: Musical group from the village. Rot Front at the Youth Festival in Kant (Kyrgyzstan)*

*Right: Provision of social and medical assistance at the center of social support in Kustanay city (Kazakhstan)*

## Programme activities

Head organizations of ethnic Germans are implementing projects in all three countries within the framework of the Programme in the following areas: ethno-cultural work, youth outreach, language activities, support to self-organization, promoting development of “Vanguard” (active representatives of the German minority in different spheres of life), and social work.

Ethno-cultural work is done mostly through a network of community centers by conducting holidays, festivals, organizing leisure and other ethnic and cultural projects. There are active and creative teams at community centers that represent distinct German culture in society at country and regional levels.

Great importance is given to work with young people, which includes seminars, forums, youth camps and camp sites. The youth linguistic camps and discussion platforms on contemporary issues (ecology, history, and ethnicity, etc.) are organized on an annual basis, where children and adolescents can relax during the holidays, while learning and communicating in German and other languages.

In Kazakhstan, up to 12,000 people annually attend free language courses and various linguistic projects conducted within the framework of the language activities.

Promotion of development of “Vanguard” is implemented mainly through scholarships, solo exhibitions, assistance in the publication of scientific papers and participation of active members of the German minority in scientific conferences.

Support of self-organizations is carried out through financial and advisory support of structures of organizations of ethnic Germans in each country. Social work is an important aspect of the Programme. Responding to the high demand for humanitarian and social assistance, the Programme aims to maintain minimum living standards of vulnerable citizens.

Particular attention is paid to the older generation, which carries the cultural values and traditions of the German people and can transfer them to the younger generation. Projects such as Winter Aid in the form of distribution of food and coal, individual social assistance and preventive treatment of older people are implemented annually.

Moreover, for the purposes of providing humanitarian and social assistance in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, charity funds were created by GIZ together with organizations of ethnic Germans on behalf of BMI. They regularly provide social (e.g., hot meals, food parcels in Kyrgyzstan) and medical assistance to the people in need, and implement humanitarian projects of other donors.



Youth Club “Jugendkreis” in Fergana, Uzbekistan

## Results

As a result of the Programme, the German minority receives support through cultural, linguistic, and educational projects, which in turn contribute to the cultural diversity of the countries in the region. Thanks to the annual humanitarian and social assistance, thousands of citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are able to maintain their standard of living.

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