

OPEN SOCIETY IN

KAZAKHSTAN

A BRIEF HISTORY

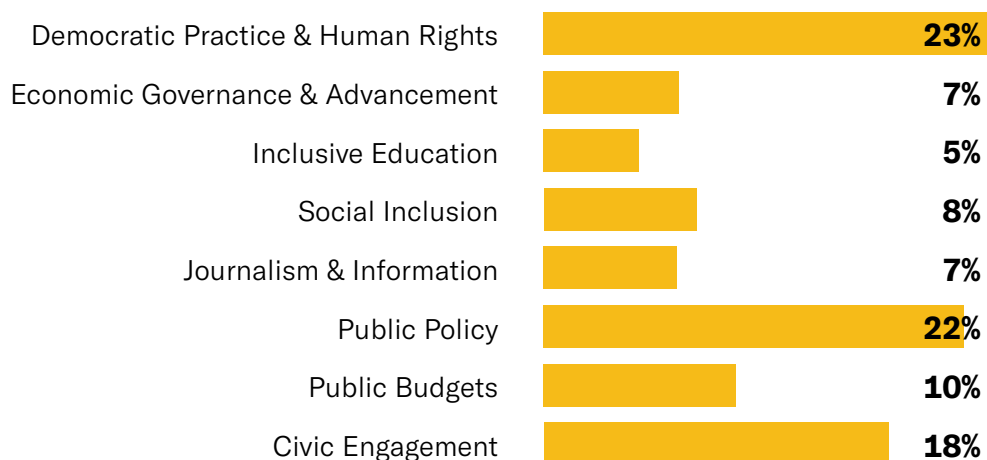
The Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan (SFK) began its work in 1995, opening its offices in Almaty just four years after the county declared its independence from the collapsing Soviet Union. In common with other foundations established by Open Society across the former Soviet bloc in the 1990s, much of the new foundation's initial funding sought to support the challenging transition to new ways of thinking after decades of Communist rule.

Early priorities included helping the government reshape basic services such as healthcare and education, to put a new focus on meeting the needs of individuals rather than the system. At the same time, Open Society scholarships gave hundreds of young students from Kazakhstan the chance to travel abroad to study in universities in Europe and the United States, so they could return home with new skills and expertise.

Today, governed by the board comprised of leading local figures, the Kazakhstan foundation continues to pursue the ideals of an open society, working to protect human rights, to ensure transparency and accountability of public finances, to advance interest of marginalized groups, to build capacity of young policy experts, and to promote the development of independent media and vibrant civil society.

Since 1995, SFK has granted more than \$70 million to promote civil-society initiatives in Kazakhstan.

KAZAKHSTAN: 2017 GRANTS BY SECTOR



Total Grant-giving
Expenditure in 2017:

\$1.4M

Total Number of Grantees:

273

9 FACTS ABOUT KAZAKHSTAN

AND THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

- 1** Since 1996, over 50,000 children in Kazakhstan have been educated in preschool and elementary classes supported by Step by Step, a child-centered curriculum developed with funding from Open Society.
- 2** Since it was set up in 1998 with the foundation's support, the Soros Center for Contemporary Art – Almaty (SCCA), has promoted the work of Kazakhstan's contemporary artists both at home and around the world.
- 3** The foundation's support for the development of independent media has included funding the training of more than 700 journalists since 2005.
- 4** Open Society's global focus on improving care for the terminally ill contributed to the government's decision to establish National Palliative Care Standards in Kazakhstan in 2013.
- 5** The foundation continues to support transparency in Kazakhstan's important oil and gas sector, including the involvement of local NGOs in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which Kazakhstan joined in 2005.
- 6** SFK's support helped the government develop the Open Local Budget Index (OLBI), which since 2011 has been used to improve transparency and accountability in regional budget spending, and more effective citizen involvement at the local level.
- 7** In 2008, Kazakhstan launched a modernized specialized juvenile justice system that was developed with the support of SFK, for the first time providing children with appropriate services and protections.
- 8** The foundation is a major supporter of ZhasCamp, a regional youth conference that offers young people the chance to engage with national and international experts on the big issues of the day.
- 9** Between 1995 and 2013 Open Society Foundations' scholarships program enabled some 2,000 students from Kazakhstan to study at leading US and European universities.