



Pamir High Mountains Integrated Project Bulletin 14. 2\04.

Republic of Tajikistan GBAO

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ACTED
Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement.

Monthly issue

PHIP is an integrated development project implemented by the INGO ACTED. It is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNESCO. It started operating in 1999 and aims at improving the livelihood of the local population by opening up sustainable economic options. Support to civil society, capacity building, and support to vulnerable population are the focus of activities. The project is organized into departments responsible for “Agriculture, Environment and Livestock”, “Community Social Infrastructures”, “Social and Poverty Alleviation”, “Support to local handicraft”, “Credit and Capacity Building” and “Culture”. The latest program aims at developing structures for community based ecotourism.

Key events in February

- “The Pamiri Kyrgyz”: book promotion event in the ACTED Murghab resource centre.
- Visit by James Gibson, ACTED Central Asia micro-finance adviser and Abdigapar Askarov, ACTED Batken loan officer to review the micro finance program and to broaden the range of credit products
- The first steps in the yearly mobilization process: Visit by Feruz Egamberdiev ACTED Karshi Community Mobilizer
- The coordination team has given up smoking

Breaking News --- Breaking News ---Breaking News ---Breaking News ---Breaking News --



The road to China is of impressive quality. The newly paved part starts, for the moment, some 50 km east of Murghab.

- CHINA: According to an announcement of Hukumat, the border road to China via Kulma Pass will be opened on the 18th of May. Residents of GBAO will be allowed to travel up to Kashgar without Chinese visa, residents of the western Xinjiang will be allowed up to Khorog without Tajik visa and GBAO permit. People of other nationality will need a valid visa for the respective countries. An increase of trade as well as an easier access to facilities can be foreseen. The road between GBAO and the Karakorum Highway also represents an interesting option for tourism development.
- MIGRATION: The government of Tajikistan is assisting the resettlement of Murghabis in other regions of Tajikistan: about 35 families will move this spring to Penjikent and Dangara in a first resettlement movement.
- ACCESS : According to Khorog OVIR (police / foreigners registration), GBAO permits can be obtained directly in Khorog and Murghab starting from March 2004. This concerns visitors from E.U., USA and Japan.



Reports by departments

All departments were heavily involved in situation analysis and action planning for the coming season. That included various visits to all villages of the rayon with village meetings and -walk-through, focus group discussions, household interviews and interest group meetings. The planning is ongoing, and a 'Community Mobilizer' has been hired.

The emergency coal selling to vulnerable families to a subsidized price has come to an end – as was agreed with the 'coal commission' and due to decreasing demand. A total of 2.8 tons were sold.

The Yak House

The Yak House elected a new treasurer as the present one had to resign for personal reasons. An assistant to Jumagul, driving force of the Yak House, was hired in order to extend the activities with a greater outreach to villages and most vulnerable families. Groups of women interested in getting involved in the Yak House were identified during the village meetings. Pilot export products were sent to France to set up trade links. New products were designed and sent to the BCC in Dushanbe, where a "Yak House shop" promoting the products but also Eastern Pamir culture is going to be opened soon. Sales in BCC since December amounted to 2500 TJS.

Culture

The Pamiri Kyrgyz book was presented to the Murghab population. A list of artists ready to cooperate with the project for cultural events or for preparation of educational material was completed, their short autobiographies is available. The Resource Centre is operating once a week, 39 visitors used the offer in February.

Reimbursement for the schoolbooks provided by the project to the rayon's PTAs has encountered difficulties. After discussions with teachers and parents in the villages the scheme will be changed into book rental by the PTAs with longer term credits.

Agriculture

After discussions with the veterinary department on additional Foot and Mouth prophylactic vaccines as well as de-parasiting medicines, 5l of Asia 1 (Anti F&M) arrived in Murghab.

Leaflets giving easy information on best practise for high mountain agriculture, are being prepared. Interested groups of people to get involved in the kitchen garden program have been identified in various villages. An extension service transferring info from experienced and successful farmers to new clients is being planned.

Credit

Visit by the ACTED Central Asia consultant and a Batken specialist on group formation in order to streamline Murghab with other ACTED Central Asia micro credit programmes. The new concepts (group credits) are being disseminated in the villages with varying echo, as the idea of working and risking in groups is not widely accepted by the population. Reimbursement rate of outstanding credits for livestock and small business is up to 130% of the expected sum.

Ecotourism

The publishing of the Pamirs map is going into its final phase.

A Marco Polo photo safari was undertaken with a tourist in early February. A META guide and the Jartigumbez hunting camp were involved (accommodation). Planning with hunting companies in order to start a one month campaign on 'saving the Pamirs great treasure', the Marco Polo sheep, is ongoing. The input of the Dushanbe institute of zoology is previewed for April, and cooperation with biology teachers and schools are envisioned.

A homestay in Bulun Kul and a guide for the Sarez route were identified during the village assessment. This will open the META a new trek, and it will allow tourists to stop over between Khorog and Murghab.

Contact with two individual tourists for early summer treks is established, the itineraries are being finalized.

Rehabilitation

The temperatures creeping above 0°C, works have taken up again: the unfinished roof of Beshgumbez school is receiving its roofing after applying a layer of insulating material, and the Suu Bashi bridge is being accomplished using heavy machinery hardly available in Murghab. Needs for rehabilitation of the homestays and the Murghab museum were assessed in cooperation with the Ecotourism department

Support to Most Vulnerable Families

The design of adapted credit terms is ongoing. The goats are breeding, the chicken are still on winter strike.



special reports – special reports – special reports – special reports – special reports**Visit of James Gibson, ACTED Central Asia micro-finance adviser**

James Gibson visited the project for two weeks at the end of January-beginning of February in order to review ACTED Murghab Micro Finance Project (MFP) component. James helped the team design new micro finance instruments targeting the most vulnerable households (thus introducing the concept of tontine groups to Murghab). He also suggested to create micro finance instruments targeting entrepreneurs, one objective of which would be to increase employment in Murghab district. In addition he recommended to extend the support to livestock loans be extended from one to two years, in order to better match animal breeding (especially Yak breeding) cycle.

Presentation of the “Pamiri Kirghiz” book

The “Pamiri Kirghiz” book was presented on February 6th in ACTED/PHIP resource centre in the presence of representatives of local authorities, of the Dostuk community fund and representatives of communities interested in culture promotion. Participants agreed that the book was a big step forward towards promoting the “Pamiri Kirghiz” culture and discussed the ways to further promote it in and outside Murghab district. The participants suggested that the book should be followed up by a CD of Pamiri Kirghiz music.

During a field visit in Shaimak, the president of the Village Organization presented a local borrowing scheme for the book in order to reach a broader range of lectors, a model that could well be copied by other villages.



One attendee giving his opinion about the Pamiri Kirghiz book

The PHIPs new approach to Community Mobilization

It took half a year to digest the input of an SDC workshop in Gharm in July 2003 and to include the lessons learned into other field experience and discussions with locals, local staff and experts. But in December the baby was born: a step-by-step approach to stronger include communities in all phases of project implementation, thus altering their responsibilities in planning, doing and monitoring.

February saw the arrival of an ACTED consultant from Karshi to assist the staff in the first steps of the cycle and to train the newly employed mobilizer. Results of the first round of the needs identification are promising: the contact to local communities as well as information on



the project have greatly improved, and possible activities as well as sites are being identified in a more transparent and participative manner – including the understanding by a broader community of their responsibilities and needed inputs if they want projects to be implemented and successful.



Compiled by the PHIP team.

