



Pamir High Mountains Integrated Project Bulletin 15. 3\04.

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Monthly issue



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

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 March

- Village assessments, part of the PHIP’s mobilization process, were completed and allowed to identify the biggest problems faced by Murghabis. The 2004 project planning is being done accordingly;
- Murghab district development partners visited Muzcol coal deposit. A probe of the coal was taken and sent for analysis in Kyrgyzstan;
- The Yak House added to its selling points in Central Asia the Dushanbe based “Marian’s guest house”.

Reports by departments

In addition to being heavily involved in Murghab district village assessments and 2004 action planning (see special report), the PHIP’s departments main achievements in March consisted in the following:

The Yak House

Since March, the Yak House products are being sold in Marian’s guest house, in Dushanbe, in addition to the Bactria Cultural Centre. The Yak House products will also be sold in CAMP shop, to be opened in Dushanbe at the beginning of May. It is envisioned that Dushanbe sales will represent the Yak House biggest sales figure in 2004.

Rehabilitation

Bashgumbez school rehabilitation was completed. Its roof was insulated with a material available locally, an algae available in big quantities on the shore of Rang-Kul lake. The insulation of the roof has allowed pupils and teachers to enjoy more comfortable, warmer rooms. Building on this success, it is envisioned to popularize the use of Rang-Kul algae to insulate both public and private buildings.



In order to further build the capacities of ACTED/PHIP staff on energy saving techniques, one of ACTED/PHIP engineer participated in an energy saving seminar organized by CAMP in Jalalabad, Kirghizstan, at the beginning of March. The next step for ACTED engineers is to share their knowledge with local masters and MSDSP staff, who are also involved in social infrastructure rehabilitation.

Ecotourism

Additional upgrading to be done in the existing home stays was discussed and agreed upon with the home-stay owners. Repairs will be conducted in April and May and will allow the guest houses to be ready on time for the tourism season. Likewise, the Eastern Pamir map is currently under print and will be ready for the tourism season.

Culture

ACTED/PHIP culture department is preparing an Eastern Pamir festival to be held in the Dushanbe based Bactria Cultural Centre in May. The festival will include a conference for the launch of the GBAO tourist map-currently under print, as well as a handicrafts and painting exhibition. ACTED/PHIP resource centre continues to be opened to the public every Friday. 27 readers visited the resource centre in March.

Community mobilization

On the 18th of March, the results of the 1st step of mobilization/planning were completed culminating in a provisional planning meeting of all the project's departments. The priorities for 2004 were discussed according the needs and ideas of communities and reconciled with the PHIP program priorities. A total of 10 villages and 21 neighbourhoods (in Murghab town) were assessed, approximately 1400 individuals of the Murghab population of just over 12000 gave their voice in household interviews, focus group discussions, village meetings and by filing blank forms.

As main problems and to no surprise, the bad or nonexistent electric energy situation and the lack of fuel for heating, accompanied by the ongoing desertification process were identified as the most pressing issues. The PHIP will try to address these problems at various levels:

- Invite an expert on solar energy to design a plan for individual/neighbourhood energy supply using solar technology (and taking into account the inshallah soon opening Chinese option, where great leaps forward have been made concerning the use of alternative energies)
- Promote the local construction and use of solar ovens for cooking during part of the year.
- Energy efficient architecture: conduct a demonstration worksite in Murghab (primary



Tokhtamysh village meeting



school) using energy saving techniques including locally available insulation materials and energy efficient stoves under the supervision of Flurin Saluz who had assisted the project the previous year.

- Evaluate the chances of opening a coal mine in one of the presumed or known deposits with the help of a mining expert (see special report “Coal”).

More local problems were identified and led to the following prioritization for the departments:

Rehabilitation: *Water* (for drinking and irrigation), health education and environmental sanitation, the latter including a plan for waste management.



Household interview in Kunar Kurgan

Health and Education: rehabilitation of Hospitals, Medical Points and Schools will complement the work done during the previous years.

Agriculture will design a plan to use technology in order to extend the arable land: ploughs drawn by horses will allow for an extension of agro-land especially in Madian, some minor canal rehabilitation will be done for kitchen gardens, hay making and winter pasture, and small greenhouses will be provided to the most active beneficiaries.

Culture will have to revise the schoolbook program with the PTAs and take other educational material like posters etc into its offer. Sports and musical inventory have been greatly requested by most communities, mainly by the youth facing unemployment and the lack of occupation.

The Yak House found in most communities women interested in joining the program, either by forming groups of handicraft producers after receiving training, or by providing wool. In addition, assistance to open wool processing and tailoring workshops was requested. This would add to the Yak House an interesting, local demand driven new component and shall be analysed.

Ecotourism identified with the concerned communities 2 homestays at both gateways to the Eastern Pamirs, Bulun Kul and Kara Kul. This will allow visitors to discover the beauties of those regions (lake Yashilkul and Sarez, Muzkol range and Tanyamas valley) without backtracking considerable distances. The breaking news of newsletter # 3 (Kulma Pass and the permit issue) found its way into the internet and did provoke quite a bit of interest of potential visitors. It does, though still have to be confirmed by reality.

The Micro Finance Project did discover various initiatives to diversify local sources of income, namely workshops (from mechanics over leather processing to stove-makers) and local trade in the most far off villages, all in need of credits to get their business started. The new design of the credit program (see newsletter # 3) which was widely explained in the



villages (group credits, internal rotating funds etc) will allow to better cater to clients needs. The extension of livestock credits to 2 years was welcome, even though still considered too short in view of the yak reproductive cycle of 3 years.



Women focus group in Kara Kul

The poverty alleviation program will strengthen the goat breeding component, as this has proven the most successful. The duration of the goat credit will be extended, in order to lead the clients to an economic situation which will allow them to undertake business or make a living with their resources.

The departments are now in the detailed planning phase, designing programs based on their experience, the results of the assessment and the interested groups in the local communities

The PHIP expects that this form of planning will give the project a stronger rooting within the communities and thus empower the communities to solve their problems themselves.



special reports - special reports - special reports - special reports - special reports**Coal deposit in Muzkol**

On the 10th of March a joined commission of Hukumat headed by Hokim Ydrys Shadjanov, composed of representatives of MSDSP, road construction and ACTED met with a delegation of Kara Kul jemoat and community members interested in exploiting the deposits. Hukumat and ACTED took a probe of the coal – extracted less than 1 m from the surface – to have it analyzed. If the analysis proves promising, the three above mentioned parties will pool together resources to open a pit with a bulldozer in order to extract the expected better quality coal from further down. ACTED is considering to give a “small enterprise credit” – longer duration, higher interest rate – to the group of people who want to exploit the mine. Even though fossil energies might not be the ultimate answer to energy related problems, an easily exploitable coal deposit of satisfying quality in Murghab rayon would greatly improve living conditions – and take pressure off the disappearing resource Teresken.



The joined commission inspecting the pit opened by some inhabitants of Kara Kul

Compiled by the PHIP team.

