SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ISSYK-KUL REGION, KYRGYZSTAN

More than 60 percent of the population of Kyrgyzstan lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Most of the farms are small and run by individual farmers, who have been identified as vulnerable groups for poverty. Women account for 30 percent of the economically active population in agriculture. Against this background, there was a lack of experienced and trained personnel and farmers, as well as a shortage of modern equipment and communication means. The project aimed to support the development of agriculture in the Issyk-Kul region in Kyrgyzstan, by improving the technical capacity of farmers, especially rural women, and promoting modern crop management and plant protection techniques.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?
The establishment of two associations of self-help groups (SHG) strengthened the capabilities of the rural population by protecting their rights and interests, improving the efficiency of farming communities, coordinating their entrepreneurial activities, and promoting sustainable development of the rural areas. A number of activities, such as farmer field schools, business planning training, the establishment and management of revolving funds, and other capacity-building activities, were organized. The project facilitated cooperation between seed farms and small-scale farmers for growing maize, fodder beet and other fodder crops. Demonstrations of new varieties of fodder crops and cultivation techniques were carried out, raising farmers’ awareness of superior varieties. No-till technology, including machinery, was introduced as part of the Conservation Agriculture activities, which will result in the preservation of soil fertility, and lead to higher agricultural productivity. In addition, 54 heifers were distributed to groups of women, to supplement their incomes and improve their livelihoods.

IMPACT
The introduction of innovative techniques and the organization of practical training courses contributed to improving land, crop and livestock production, as well as management. In particular, the project contributed to building the productivity potential of women smallholder farmers, improving their access to assets, resources and services, and expanding their income opportunities and access to high-value product markets.

KEY FACTS

Contribution
USD 500 000

Duration
July 2015 – July 2018

Resource Partners
Government of Switzerland

Partners
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Amelioration, Kyrgyzstan

Beneficiaries
Farmers and their families; the rural populations at large, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Amelioration, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in modern application techniques
ACTIVITIES

- Fifty-nine SHGs and two SHG associations were successfully established in Ton and Tyup rayons, comprising a total of 400 members, of which 114 were male and 286 were female (71.5 percent).
- A total of 32 training sessions were delivered to all the SHGs on gender development, management of income-generating activities, group activities and the development of the Charter, saving and internal group loans, among others.
- A study tour was organized for a group of 33 beneficiaries from ten project villages to visit successful associations of SHGs in Kadjy-Say and Eshperov villages of Ton rayon, to enhance the capacities of beneficiaries on the establishment of community-based organizations and funds.
- Demonstration plots of selected alternate crops were established, which produced good results.
- A total of KGS 85 200 in Ton rayon and KGS 164 000 in Tyup rayon were collected from revolving funds (which were established during the project) by the SHG, through refunding of the cost of seeds provided by the project, renting out of machinery and membership fees.
- Two sets of field equipment (tractors, no-till planters and fodder harvesting machines) were procured and delivered to the associations in Tyup and Ton rayons.
- Training sessions on crop production and management practices were organized by the implementing partner Training, Advisory and Innovation Center (TAIC).

Project Code
FAO: GCP/KYR/014/SWI

Project Title
Sustainable Agricultural Development of Issyk-Kul region (with a special focus on rural women)

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