

Fruit Trees in the Villages

Carl Beien, Sustainable Development Volunteer

United States Peace Corps

Executive Summary:

This project seeks to provide fruit tree saplings to the residents of Orto Nura village, in the impoverished Naryn region of the Kyrgyz Republic. We will purchase fruit trees from a cooperative in the neighboring Issyk Kul province. They will transport them to Orto Nura village, and upon distribution, teach the villagers the best places to plant them, and how to maintain them.

Background:

Kyrgyzstan is a highly impoverished, landlocked former Soviet republic. Once called “The Island of Democracy” in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan has since seen two democratically elected presidents turn into dictators, and both times their rule ended in popular common revolt. This, however, has left the country in a near development standstill. Many people in the vast countryside still yearn for the old days of Soviet organization and funding.

Today, with Soviet-style, top down project management a distant memory, people are exceedingly interested in engaging in the free market. This means owning their own land, their own animals, and buying and selling products to private businessmen, and in the bazaars. In this part of the world however, supply lines are still underdeveloped, and even more than money, people lack access to high quality products, and good information to reinforce them with.

Statement of Need:

This project focuses directly on issues of market economics. The partner cooperative that is selling the saplings has put together an excellent program that addresses many of the development issues that people in rural Kyrgyzstan face. They need good products, and good information. The cooperative has identified this need, and sought to service it completely.

Upon receiving the trees, the villagers of Orto Nura will be able to engage with the free market in a new way. Alongside standard crops of potatoes, onions and barley, villagers will now be able to produce a new crop for sale or consumption. From these fruits, marketable products such as jam will be open to them, without having to buy the fruits from outside sources, further allowing them to concentrate wealth.

There is also the health benefit. Fruits provide valuable nutrition that many of these people would otherwise not have access to. Kyrgyzstan, being a low density, highly mountainous nation suffers from poor transportation infrastructure. By the time produce reaches many of the villages, especially in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan’s poorest region, it is both old and expensive. Villagers that don’t have their own trees, or the

means to travel into major cities, often simply go without. Furthermore, the tradition of jarring and canning foods for winter is strong here. People know how to turn fruits into jams, and vegetables into salads, and then to store them for the long winter months, thus improving their diet during these lean times. However, in order to employ these skills, they must first have access to the necessary inputs.

Project Goal, Action Plan and Budget:

In developing this project, Mr. Kochkunbek has been identified as a responsible community leader in Orto Nura village. He is an exceptionally hard working individual, and is well known in the community. He currently hosts a Peace Corps volunteer, Rachel, who teaches English at the school where his wife also works. Peace Corps volunteer Rachel has also agreed to help monitor the program, and facilitate communications between myself and Mr. Kochkunbek.

- *Goal:* To distribute 500 fruit tree saplings to the villagers of Orto Nura.
 - *Objective:* Identify participating villagers
 - *Task:* Identify community leader: Carl
 - *Task:* Explain project to individual villagers: Kochkunbek (identified community leader)
 - *Task:* Compile list of participating villagers: Kochkunbek
 - *Task:* Attain commitment from participating villagers to pay 10% of the cost of each sapling: Kochkunbek
 - *Objective:* Secure distribution and training location
 - *Task:* Explain project to village government: Kochkunbek
 - *Task:* Obtain permits from village government for free use of land to conduct distribution and training: Kochkunbek
 - *Objective:* Place order for trees
 - *Task:* Compile completed list of participating villagers: Carl
 - *Task:* Collect all monies donated via Internet: Carl
 - *Task:* determine number of saplings to be purchased: Carl
 - *Task:* Place order for saplings: Carl
 - *Objective:* Train and distribute saplings,
 - *Task:* Bring saplings to Orto Nura: NGO
 - *Task:* Gather all participating villagers at distribution point: Kochkunbek
 - *Task:* Teach all participating villagers how to plant and care for saplings: NGO
 - *Task:* Gather monies/Distribute saplings: NGO/Kochkunbek/Carl

Budget

Item	Unit/Cost	Donated Contribution	Community Contribution	Total
Saplings	1 Tree/\$3.33	\$1,575	\$175	\$1,750*
Instruction	1 Place/ \$50	\$0	\$50	\$50

Space				
Total	--	\$1,575	\$225	\$1,800

*This number is subject to some flexibility. The online money transfer service takes 2.9%, the bank transfer will take another percent, and the exchange rate will fluctuate. However, the NGO will allow us to purchase more than 500 saplings, so any extra money will go to the purchase of additional trees. The final number, with receipt, will be subsequently posted at KyrgyCarl.com for maximum accountability.