



## CASE SUMMARY

# Creating Value for All: Community-Based Tourism

**Country:** Kyrgyzstan

**MDGs addressed:**



**Sector:** Tourism

**Author:** Sheradil Baktygulov & Damira Raeva

**Inclusion of the poor:** Entrepreneur

**Lead organization:** MSME

**Theme(s):** Civil Society-Business Collaboration; Donor Support; Environmental Impact

## Abstract



Photo: KCBTA

Community-based tourism (CBT) was introduced to Kyrgyzstan by the Swiss Association for International Cooperation, Helvetas, and was well supported by local communities. The first CBT group was established in May 2000 in Kochkor village (hereinafter CBT Kochkor) and since then the number of CBT organizations has grown to eighteen.

The main objective of CBT groups in Kyrgyzstan is to promote sustainable Community-based ecotourism services that offer tourists unique experiences, generate incomes for rural families and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the country. Among the services that CBT groups provide to tourists and tour operators are booking services for home-stays, yurtas/jailoo tourism and trekking, guided tours of cultural and historic sites, handicraft demonstrations and sales, car rentals and miscellaneous tourist information. The provision of these services is the main source of income for individual service providers and CBT groups.

In 2003, local CBT groups formed their own umbrella organization, the Kyrgyz Community-Based Tourism Association (KCBTA), a non-profit membership organization for the further development and coordination of tourist activities within the country. The association provides marketing and training services to its members and represents their interests at the national level.

CBT brings numerous benefits to the wider community by increasing the standard of living in rural areas, which helps in reducing migration to urban areas. Other businesses that provide ancillary tourism services such as cafés, restaurants, taxis, shops, groceries also benefit from CBT.



## Quote

*“My work within the CBT Kochkor gave me an understanding that the good condition of the environment and the actions to support the ecological sustainability will benefit local people twice. First, tourists are ready to pay for an opportunity to experience the nature they have not seen. Second, better ecology means a healthy life style for local people. These are two reasons for establishing CBT Plus Eco. Our CBT is a Kochkor - based CBT, but we work with poor people from a mountain small village next to the Sususmyr valley.”*

Ms. Bugalcha Nishanova, former CBT member and Founder of the Public Association “CBT Plus Eco”

## Strategy Matrix

	Adapt products and processes	Invest in removing constraints	Leverage the strengths of the poor	Combine resources and capabilities	Engage in policy dialogue with government
Market information		Limited information about CBT products, services and providers resulting in lack of trust in CBT Awareness raising and marketing campaigns			
Regulatory environment					
Physical infrastructure					Poorly developed physical infrastructure CBT /KCBTA organizing policy dialogues and applying for donor funding
Knowledge & skills				Lack of knowledge and skills to develop and run adequate/sustainable tourism services Capacity building of local communities with CBTSP and KCBTA	
Access to financial services				Lack of access to financial resources, such as credit and other financial services Established revolving fund for CBT members with CBTSP	



## Actors

- **Kyrgyz Community-based Tourism Association (KCBTA):** aims to incorporate CBT into the mainstream tourism industry in Kyrgyzstan. Today, the association is an umbrella association that includes 18 CBT groups and a 5-group association of shepherd families. It supports the development of new or existing CBT groups throughout the country, enhancement of rural tourism infrastructure and growth in living standards of local communities through income generation and job creation.
- **Rural inhabitants:** provide direct tourism services, supply other goods and services to tourists, for instance through the operation of local grocery stores, handicraft retail, etc.
- **Community Based Tourism Support Project (CBTSP):** implemented and facilitated by Helvetas. It provides rural tourism entrepreneurs with marketing support and training through the start-up and growth phases of their business development. It is therefore instrumental in the CBT business model success in Kyrgyzstan.
- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):** The OSCE Center in Bishkek provides valuable support to CBT development in Kyrgyzstan and replication of the CBT model in its neighboring countries, such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, primarily through supporting and leveraging KCBTA.

## Results

- **Economic:** The total number of tourists using CBT services in 2008 was 9,260, a 13 fold increase from 2000 (718 tourists). The total turnover increased from 7,983 USD in 2000 to 250,554 USD in 2008. These numbers indicate the growing popularity of CBT in Kyrgyzstan.
- **Social:** with increasing demand for CBT products and services by tourists, the benefits to locals have been increasing. During the 2008 tourist season, CBT groups generated 412 direct jobs with an average salary about 40 USD per month. The whole community enjoys indirect benefits from tourism such as improved infrastructure, environmental awareness and cultural preservation.
- **Environmental:** an Ecological Code was developed as a set of guidelines for CBT members and the community in general. It includes ecological and cultural conservation principles as well as principles related to local community development and ecotourism promotion. It was decided to include the Ecological Code as an integral part of any cooperation agreements that the KCBTA signs with other partners as a guarantee of the environmental sustainability of the CBT model.

## Research Fellows



**Sheradil Baktygulov** is an Independent Consultant to the Kyrgyz Government and a Public Advisor to a Member of Kyrgyz Parliament. Currently, he is engaged in several projects on decentralization, improving the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development and Labor, the Ministry of Education and Science, enhancing



cooperation between the Kyrgyz Government and civil society organizations, and economic forecasting at local level in Tajikistan. Also, Sheradil works for the International University of Kyrgyzstan as a part time instructor. During 2008, Sheradil studied in America at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). He was awarded a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship (Fulbright Scholar) and studied Public Policy Analysis/Public Administration/Economic Development Policy.



**Damira Raeva** has gained extensive experience with development projects on poverty overcoming in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in other countries of Central Asia. Her experience includes identification, design, monitoring and evaluation of development projects (especially in ecotourism), designing and leading of training programmes for rural entrepreneurs, fundraising, budgeting, and social mobilization of local communities. She has been the Project Manager of Community Based Tourism Support Project. She has also been the Project Manager of Destination Marketing Organization, supporting private-public association to develop and implement marketing strategy in order to promote Kyrgyzstan as a tourism destination on the world tourism market.

## Citation

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