

USAID Quarterly Report #6

DISASTER RELIEF IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

Grant Number: 116-0001-G-00-8024

Report Period: January 1 – March 31, 2000

Implementing Agency:

Mercy Corps International
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Mercy Corps International was awarded a grant of \$790,384 from USAID on September 25, 1998 with two subsequent modifications of \$240,000 and \$205,805 in June and July of 1999 (effective date - August 28, 1999) for a total of \$1,236,189 toward five construction projects in southern Kyrgyzstan. Mercy Corps worked closely with the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Relief (MEDR) to identify strategic projects.

The initial grant of \$790,384 was used to rehabilitate a school in Kyrkool, Alai region of Osh Oblast and construct two levees at sites referred to as Intimak and Chicken Factory in the Suzak region of Jalal Abad Oblast. The school was completed in the first quarter and the levees were completed in the 3rd quarter. Both levees were constructed according to Kyrgyz standards and passed inspection by local authorities overseeing levees.

The remaining funds were used to build a combination music school and police station in Suzak City and an additional levee at the Chicken Factory site. The music school/police station, destroyed by floods, was completed in October of 1999. Mercy Corps advertised a tender for the construction of the music school/police station in a local newspaper with the highest circulation in Jalal Abad Oblast. The construction passed all inspection and is currently in use by the school and the local police.

For its fifth structure, Mercy Corps initially planned to reconstruct the levee on the Kugart River near Suzak City, however the World Bank was advertising tenders to do the construction on this site. With approval from MEDR, the funds were diverted toward reconstruction of an additional levee at the Chicken Factory site. This project will extend the levee at Chicken Factory an additional 1.5 kilometers, for a total length of 3 kilometers. Additionally, it was agreed that Mercy Corps would rehabilitate two small sections of levees that were partially destroyed near the Intimak site. Mercy Corps advertised in a local newspaper with the highest circulation in the region for construction bids. The addition to the levee was completed in March of 2000.

PROJECTS COMPLETED THIS QUARTER:

Extension of the Levee at the Chicken Factory Site

The levee at the Chicken Factory site was extended a total of 1,478 meters on the right bank of the Kugart River, several kilometers upstream from the city of Suzak. The levee construction consisted of three parts: 1) embankment construction, 2) rock overlaying, and 3) dirt filling.

- 1) Embankment construction of 46,560 cubic meters was completed on October 1.
- 2) Rock overlaying of 26,805 cubic meters was completed this quarter.
- 3) Dirt filling of 19,000 cubic meters was completed this quarter.

The work carried out by the contractor and subcontractors was satisfactory. Several local authority representatives commented on the high quality of the work completed by the contractors.

Minor problems occurred during construction but did not significantly interfere with target dates or quality. In January, the Uzbekistan Government closed the Uzbekistan border. However, Mercy Corps received special transit permission from the Jalal Abad Governor and the Andijan Oblast Administration for all trucks hauling rocks from the Aravan quarry to the levee site to cross the border. This privilege enabled the project to continue as planned. An alternative transport route through Uzgen, Osh would have resulted in an additional 120 kilometers per trip at a cost of \$10 for each shipment. With several thousand trips necessary to transport rocks to the Chicken Factory site, the additional cost would have been significant.

Mercy Corps was forced to find an alternative petroleum supplier after the contracted supplier discontinued selling petroleum due to fuel price increases. Mercy Corps employed a supplier who was willing to sell for cash. In addition, the high demand for trucks spurred by World Bank and USAID levee projects as well as concurrent work on the Osh-Bishkek road, threatened to create a shortage in truck drivers. However, the potential problem was resolved by paying cash to all truck drivers upon delivery of rocks to the site.

Due to an approved change in the project, the levee is 42 meters shorter than originally planned. The preliminary design of the levee included a curve that took into account the lay of the land. Upon implementation of the project, it was realized that the flood in 1998 had washed away that particular section of land. A design change was made to remove the curve, making the levee 42 meters shorter than planned.

The levee has been tested and meets all Kyrgyz standards. Final documents were received from the State Inspection Agency. After the financial documents of the contractor and the sub-contractors are verified, Mercy Corps will release the final payment to the contractor and sub-contractors.

Rehabilitation of Two Sections of Levees Near the Intimak Site

Due to lack of funds Mercy Corps will not be able to repair the remaining two small sections of levees that were partially destroyed near the Intimak site. These projects were selected strictly as alternatives in case surplus funds were available. As such, no cutback of planned operations occurred.