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## Community Action Investment Program Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan

### Quarterly Report (October 1 – December 31, 2004)

Cooperative Agreement # 122-A-00-02-00017-00

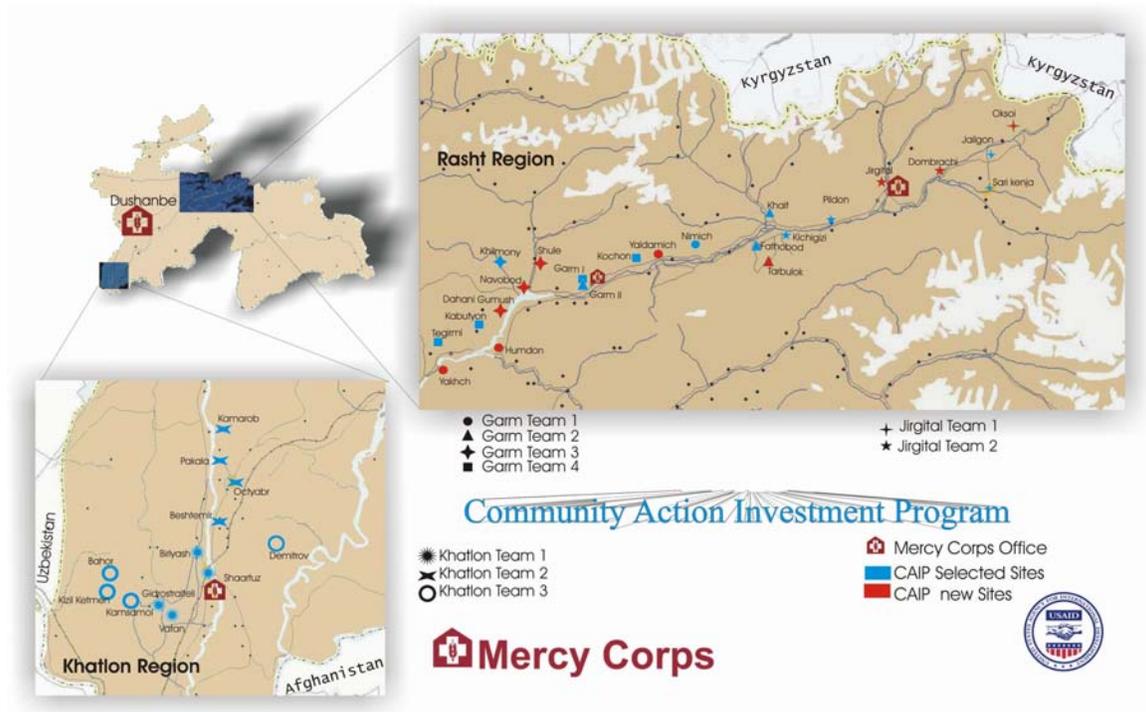
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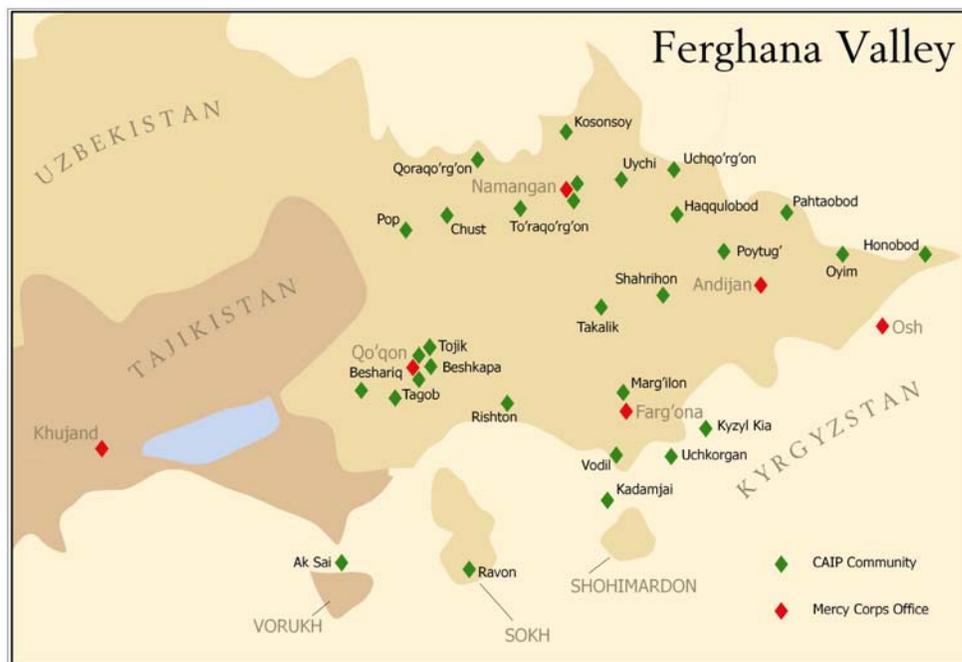
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## CAIP Communities in Tajikistan



## CAIP Communities in the Ferghana Valley (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan)





## ***Executive Summary***

Mercy Corps began implementation of USAID's Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) in the Ferghana Valley, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan in May 2002. When work within the confines of the Turkmenistan government made operations there unrealistic, this country was dropped from the CAIP portfolio (April 2004). Services in the Ferghana Valley added Kyrgyzstan in June 2003. CAIP strives to mitigate conflict in vulnerable regions of Central Asia by strengthening democratic and participatory processes within communities and by providing community members the necessary tools to address sources of tension, which might otherwise lead to conflict. CAIP works together with communities to alleviate sources of tension directly by implementing projects to improve social services and to increase economic opportunities in those communities. Mercy Corps' CAIP Program Objective is to help prevent conflict by promoting broad-based citizen participation in targeted areas; resulting in improved standards of living, more active and engaged citizens, and more open, accountable local government. We currently work in 135 communities in three countries: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

As of December 31, 2004, Mercy Corps' CAIP has attained the following objectives:

- Completed or currently executing 767 community projects (infrastructure and social), directly benefiting approximately 643,974\* people.
- Provided short-term employment to 2,530 people on community infrastructure projects; and created 1,161 long-term jobs.
- Leveraged in-kind contributions to community projects, at an average of 38 percent of total project costs.
- Established 65 democratically-elected Community Action Groups (one in each community), each with 8-12 members, an average of 28 percent of whom are women. These groups facilitate community-wide participation in decision-making, using techniques developed as part of the CAIP program.
- Conducted consensus-building workshops, a wide variety of trainings related to conflict mitigation, sustainability of CAIP methodologies, and effective communication processes, and numerous public meetings in each community, transferring skills in participatory methods to over 500 CAG members, which many have replicated in their own community meetings without Mercy Corps guidance. Over 7,000 core and cluster community members have been introduced to participatory methods during such community meetings.
- Provided in-depth advocacy skills trainings in communities so they may obtain further support for community projects after the CAIP project ends, either from within or outside their communities.
- Conducted all modules of a specially developed training program with all CAGs, building skills in application of development principles, transparency and accountability, and conducting meaningful public meetings, reaching over 500 CAG members and numerous community members.
- Began work in specific training regarding sustaining and continuously improving current and future community efforts, including: community action groups, project implementation teams, regularly scheduled public meetings, planning and cooperating with neighboring communities, and social projects and infrastructure projects.

Detailed profiles of CAIP communities are available at <http://caip.usaidcar.info/> Profiles include basic demographic information as well as Mercy Corps' conflict rationale for selecting each community.

Overall Progress Towards Targets (USAID-specified indicators, coded in Web-PRS)

Code	Description	Impact		Unit
1.1	Number of communities with CAIP projects	135		Community
1.2	Number of projects implemented without donor support			Project
1.3	Percent of costs covered by community or local government contributions	Cash	In-Kind	Percent
		Approx.5%	33%	
2.1	Number of beneficiaries	643,974*		People
2.2	Number of communities that tap into other USAID or donor programs in the region	12		Community
3.1	Number of people employed through community projects	2,530		People
3.2	Number of people employed after infrastructure project completed	1,161		People
3.3	Number of people trained	7,000+		People

Progress per country

	TAJ	UZB	TKM	KYR	Total	Diff.
<b>Communities</b>						
Expected	35	26	10	4	75	
Achieved	105	26	0**	4	135	+60

<b>Projects</b>						
Expected	170	113	0	8	291	
Achieved	176***	115	0	4***	295	+4

<b>Beneficiaries</b>						
Expected	182,000	135,200	0	20,800	338,000	
Achieved	492,148*	143,816*		8,010*	643,974*	+305,974

<b>Project Value</b>						
Mercy Corps	1,024,247	1,839,999	0	182,737	3,046,983	
Communities	762,078	1,042,251	0	78,587	1,882,916	
Total	1,786,325	2,882,250	0	261,324	4,929,899	
% Community	43%	36%	N/A	30%	38%	
MC Budgeted	2,375,000	1,835,500	578,000	150,000	4,939,000	

\*Beneficiary numbers represent the total number of people benefiting from each project, added together. This means that some people may be counted as beneficiaries two or more times, if they live in a community where several projects have been implemented that have affected them directly. Unduplicated counts can be practically achieved only by estimating the percent of the

population in any one area who have been beneficiaries of one or more of the projects that have been implemented. Estimations of unduplicated counts of beneficiaries for each country are based on 90 percent of the populations of core communities and 40 percent of the populations of cluster communities, as follows:

Uzbekistan: 105,842; Kyrgyzstan: 10,365; and Tajikistan: 58,275, for a total of 174,482.

\*\*Note about the figures in this report: The CAIP program was suspended in Turkmenistan in early 2003, pending national-level government approval. As of the time of suspension, CAIP had been working in three communities, and anticipated working in an additional seven. Mercy Corps officially withdrew from Turkmenistan in April 2004, leaving us with 65 CAIP communities in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

\*\*\*Please note that these are numbers for infrastructure projects only. Last quarter's report inadvertently included social projects in this count.

### ***Progress During the Reporting Period***

The three Intermediate Results of CAIP are:

1. Participatory and democratic processes strengthened at the community level;
2. Community social services improved through community action; and
3. Creation of sustainable and short-term jobs.

This report describes CAIP progress during the October 1 to December 31, 2004 quarter of implementation toward meeting each of these three Intermediate Results (IRs). CAIP takes an integrated approach to community empowerment with cross-cutting themes addressed throughout the implementation of each IR. Cross-cutting themes include: participatory decision-making, transparency among community members and with local government, inclusion of underrepresented groups such as women and youth, sustainability of infrastructure projects and of community action groups, and continuous capacity-building. Integral to all of these themes is the goal of conflict prevention by reducing tensions within communities that could lead to conflict.

### **Intermediate Result #1: Participatory and democratic processes strengthened at the community level**

Empower citizens to take an active role in defining and fulfilling community needs, alleviating tensions that might otherwise lead to conflict.

#### *Expected Results over the three-year life of CAIP:*

Seventy-five communities were expected to be better able to cooperatively identify common problems, prioritize and plan solutions, and design and implement those solutions through civic action and collaboration with local authorities and social service organizations. This process strengthens local democratic processes through participatory planning, critical thinking/problem solving, accountability and transparency. As a result, community social capital is increased. This social capital includes new and improved skills in the areas of leadership, advocacy, tolerance, budgeting, planning, problem solving, and facilitating effective public meetings. In addition, trust

is increased within and among individuals and communities: generalized trust, community-based trust, and trust in institutions.

*Results to Date:*

Mercy Corps CAIP achieves Intermediate Result #1 through the development and mentoring of Community Action Groups (CAGs) to perform as catalysts for community-level democratic processes. CAGs are trained in the areas of meeting facilitation, optimizing input in community decisions from all sectors of the community, tolerating and/or resolving differences, participatory decision-making, consensus building, practicing transparency and accountability, and working with local governments. As these skills are modeled by CAGs, other community members become inspired to voice their opinions and work toward community consensus. As the sense of empowerment grows, community members become more hopeful about the future of their communities, their families, and themselves. This, in turn, decreases overall tension and desperation within communities, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict. This is particularly true as Mercy Corps assist communities in sharing their experiences with neighboring communities. Many activities during this quarter have focused on this effort through the organization of community to community meetings, exchange visits, and multi-community forums.

Three primary means by which Mercy Corps strengthens participation and democratic processes at the community level are: 1) the provision of training, 2) the instigation and facilitation of public meetings, including working with neighboring communities, and 3) the development of partnerships between communities and their local governments. Sustainability of these approaches is assured through train-the-trainer courses that continue to spread leadership and facilitation skills after the completion of CAIP; through the establishment of patterns of using of public meetings for problem solving; and through the building of mutual trust and confidence between communities and between communities and their local governments.



## **Community Mobilization and Sustainability Training**

The Mercy Corps CAIP teams and Community Action Groups (CAGs) in each CAIP community received extensive training in community mobilization and facilitation of public meetings early in the CAIP program. Now that they have practiced these skills for over two years, it was determined that these concepts should be reinforced and enhanced prior to the end of the program. Mercy Corps' CAG Curriculum provides this training foundation in our CAIP communities. The CAG Curriculum for Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan consists of six modules:

- 1. Development Principles**
- 2. Transparency and Accountability**

- 3. The Value of Public Meetings**
- 4. Community Participation/Mobilization**
- 5. Conflict Resolution Skills**
- 6. Sustainable Communities**

A brief description of the topics covered under each of these modules may be found in Appendix 1 of this report. During this quarter, 30 CAGs with select representatives from their cluster communities in the Ferghana Valley received training on the community participation/mobilization and conflict resolution. Also, Mercy Corps staff joined with a smaller group of CAIP community members in project design training.

In Tajikistan, CAG members have been focusing on trainings related to the formation of an NGO. This is an important consideration for communities in Tajikistan, as it is not legal for them to collect any funds unless they are a registered NGO. Becoming an NGO is therefore one way to assist the communities in assuring sustainability of their projects. Key topics covered during the training of trainers, November 2004 in Dushanbe, were:

- **Analysis of Community Formation**
- **Structure of the Public Organizations/NGOs in Communities**
- **Roles and Importance of Public Organizations/NGOs in Development at Communities, National and International Levels**
- **Work Environment of Public Organization/NGOs**
- **Legal Bases of Public Organization/NGO Activity**
- **Mission and Target Groups of Public Organizations/NGOs**

#### ***Dmitrov Community, Kabodiyon Region of Tajikistan***

This community is rehabilitating an old cultural center that has been unusable due to dilapidation. Soldiers residing in a nearby military base became interested in this project as they observed the community pulling together to rebuild this building. After speaking with the community's CAG, ten soldiers requested permission from their commander to assist the community in their work. After approval, these soldiers worked with the community for four days in destruction of the old, unusable parts of the building. Given the fact that many soldiers are distrusted by and alienated from their communities of residence, this was a very significant event. The energy of the community members inspired and motivated the young soldiers and, in turn, the community felt the support and cooperation of the soldiers. Now, residents are less likely to see them as intruders and more likely to feel they are active members of the community.

### **Staff Development**

Mercy Corps also accelerated efforts in development of national staff during this quarter based on staff requests. Trainings on report writing, management skills, and proposal writing were provided to select Mercy Corps staff, CAG, and community members. All trainings were designed in the Training of Trainers format, allowing for future transference of these skills. Many participants have already conducted their own trainings within their communities. These trainings provided an excellent opportunity for the development of high quality partnerships with those involved in provision of trainings, including Counterpart International, MBM Group, and Junior Achievement.

Additionally, Mercy Corps has worked with staff that have displayed a high level of competency to find means of advancement and continued professional growth. Several national staff members have been moved into supervisory positions. Whenever possible, exchange visits between professionals in all three countries have been arranged, including all CAIP implementers.

#### ***Leadership Emerges Among Staff***

Dilshod comes from a small village where he was married before the age of 20 and a father of two by 23. He was originally hired as the assistant to the Kokand CAIP team, providing logistical support and administrative services to other team members. Management recognized his skills and recently promoted him to work Community Development Specialist and, in particular, to provide oversight and coordination on a new Mercy Corps initiative to build sports leagues in the Kokand City area. Dilshod has blossomed in his new role. He quickly engaged the community, the local government, and the youth organization, Kamolot, to assist in this effort. Also, a national soccer champion has agreed to work with the players, since Dilshod explained that Mercy Corps is interested in working with disenfranchised youth. Dilshod is one of several “winners” who have emerged during their employment in CAIP.

## **Public Meetings**

Hundreds of public meetings were held during this reporting period. Meetings during this quarter were focused on coordination of planned community activities, sustaining completed projects, and planning future projects without the assistance of USAID/Mercy Corps. As we move through the third year of CAIP, we witness continual improvement in communities' abilities to conduct effective, meaningful public meetings. CAGs have realized that other organized groups are needed to assure continuation of the process and improvements in their communities. Consequently, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan communities have created Sustainability Support Groups (SSGs) and Tajikistan communities have formed Project Implementation Teams (PITs) to take responsibility for follow through on projects.

A critical aspect of an effective meeting is diverse participation. Participation by youth and women has been increasing throughout the program. By the end of this quarter, Mercy Corps communities had an average of 25 percent participation by youth and 50 percent participation by women in public meetings. Additionally, all CAGs include women and youth members. As of the end of December, about 70 percent of all CAIP communities have formed separate Women CAGs and Youth CAGs, which provide input to the larger group. Women who have learned the CAIP methodologies are taking increasing responsibility for solving community problems.

### ***Women Initiate Economic Development Project in Buston***

In October 2004, the Women's Initiatives Group of the Buston community in the Ferghana Valley met to discuss the lack of jobs for women and the lack of bakery items within their community. The community consists of six streets, so the women decided to select two women from each street and train them in baking. These women would be able to produce baked goods in their homes, as the community has recently installed gas lines to each house. Each woman would take responsibility for training at least one girl in the community as well. Their baked goods are now available in Buston and in the district of Vuadil.

## **Inclusion of Cluster Communities**

In an effort to provide assistance to communities neighboring CAIP sites and to help improve relations among those communities, Mercy Corps CAIP Tajikistan has implemented “cluster” projects in non-CAIP communities throughout Khatlon and Rasht Valley. In each case, CAGs in the core communities approve use of some of their allocated funding from USAID/Mercy Corps to be used to fund projects in nearby communities. Core community CAGs assisted neighboring communities in conducting Consensus Seminars, during which projects were selected. The neighboring communities each formed a Project Implementation Team (PIT) and implemented their project under the guidance of the CAG from the core community. CAIP staff members have already observed significant outcomes from the cluster agreements, two of those include: 1) improved relations between communities that formerly clashed over access to resources and other issues; and 2) the empowerment of CAG members who are being placed in a position where they are able to advocate for the interests of neighboring communities as well as their own. In addition, these kinds of cross-community relationships will contribute to Mercy Corps’ CAIP’s goal of developing Community Action Groups, or similar representative committees, in non-CAIP communities.

This cluster initiative has increased the number of communities in which CAIP Tajikistan operates from 35 to 105. CAIP Ferghana Valley has very recently begun pursuing a similar approach and has included at least 25 additional communities in CAIP through training, attendance at public meetings and consultations from CAG members.

### ***Beshkapa Road Project***

The Beshkapa community selected a road asphaltting project as one of its last CAIP projects, identifying a road that connects their community to the center of the district by passing through a neighboring community. Given the potential benefit of this road, several communities contributed labor and food to assure success of the project. Also, a local contractor donated the needed asphalt and lent the necessary machinery for the project. Once the road was upgraded from a muddy, pot-holed, unusable area, a public transport system was born, connecting two communities to one another. The overall impact was across much of the Uchkuprik district, providing the possibility of critical services – like medical transport – to be implemented.

### ***Communities Learn from Each Other***

In one of the communities of Besharyk in Uzbekistan, a professional assessment was done to secure electrification of the community. However, the community does not know how to work with the government nor have other resources to put a plan in place. Hearing about successes in CAIP communities, a village leader came to Mercy Corps requesting help. Mercy Corps arranged for the CAG from neighboring Kokand to meet with the residents. The Besharyk community is now forming its own CAG and is receiving training from the Kokand CAG on democratic processes for public meetings and working with local government.

## **Local Government and Community Advocacy**

A key part of IR #1 is to empower communities to better advocate for their needs with local government, ensuring communities will thrive after the CAIP program ends. Mercy Corps has approached this challenge by first conducting intensive training on participatory methods, to

foster constructive dialogues within communities. As communities have grown stronger and more confident in selecting, designing, and implementing projects, they have also developed skills for collaborating with local government agencies in partnership on many of the projects. Relationships are being established between communities and their local governments, to the point where many communities are eliciting government support in planning and funding projects without Mercy Corps intervention. In many cases CAGs are obtaining sizeable government contributions. Examples include government contribution of an electrical transformer, government assistance with technical drawings, and provision of large equipment, such as cranes. As governments witness drive and commitment within communities, they begin to view community members as viable, capable partners in the development process. Both sides are coming to realize the benefits of increased collaboration. It is our expectation that these partnerships will continue after the CAIP program ends, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainability for these communities.

Mercy Corps teams spent more time during this past quarter meeting with district level government officials, reviewing the work of CAIP in their communities and investigating the level of confidence held by these officials to continue with improvements in their district. All government officials have indicated an ongoing need for financial support. However, several did suggest that communities and government are ready for an even lower percentage of assistance from USAID/Mercy Corps. This suggestion was made independently by these officials, citing suggested USAID contributions of anywhere from ten to fifty percent for future work.

Community residents are learning how to address their issues and problems to government officials. These stories show how community members are becoming proactive in advocating with local government and other partners to address their needs.

### ***Shartuz Boosts Community and Government Cooperation***

At a school building project near Shartuz, Tajikistan the CAG displayed drive and determination to ensure optimal contribution from the government. It was agreed that a new school would be built and that the local government would donate the land for the building site. However, the land originally identified by the government for this purpose was not only a long distance from the center of town, but also presented the potential for future conflict between the original land owner and the school. When the CAG addressed these issues with the government they refused an alternative site. However, the CAG persisted and went all the way to the government office in Dushanbe, eventually receiving allocation of an alternate, preferred site.

### ***Some Things Take Time***

The community of Oyim, Uzbekistan has struggled in its ability to utilize CAIP methodologies for successful completion of community projects. The situation got bad enough that several selected projects had to be cancelled due to lack of follow through by the community. Once the community realized that an important opportunity was slipping away from them, they began to mobilize. Women went door to door to encourage other community members to get active. The funds available from USAID/Mercy Corps were not adequate to cover the usual sixty to seventy percent of the total project costs. So, the community made an arrangement with their local gas company to receive the gas meters on a monthly payment plan. In addition, community members have increased individual cash and labor contributions to the project. As a result, a gasification project that was originally cancelled is now moving forward and the community has

begun to understand the power of a participatory process.

## **Sustainable Communities**

Each community in all Mercy Corps CAIP sites has created sustainability support groups to help assure that the work started by CAIP will continue after the program ends. Many of these groups have created a special community fund to be used for repairs and general assistance to residents in need. Typically, these groups collect a set amount (generally equivalent to ten to twenty cents) each month from each household to be placed in the fund. The fact that residents trust these groups with the care and use of these funds is true testament to the trust and confidence in the democratic process that has been built within these communities. Several communities have reported funds of up to \$1,000 that have been saved.

By the end of last year, Katta Tagob community had collected about \$200, which they used to repair drinking water taps. This community then collected additional funds to help a neighboring community gravel their roads, which had not been included in a previous CAIP road project. In Kyzl Kia, Kyrgyzstan, the community used their fund of approximately \$1,000 to assist large, low income families in their community with support during the Ramadan Hayit holiday in November.

## **Intermediate Result #2: Improved community social services through community action**

Improve standard of living and empowerment in CAIP communities, which leads to a decrease in potential for conflict.

*Expected Results over the three-year life of CAIP (including expansion activities):*

Completion of 4-7 small infrastructure projects in 75 communities, for a total of approximately 300 projects. Over 392,000 beneficiaries (an average of 5,200 per community) will have gas, electricity and/or similar services through the provision of improved infrastructure, human and physical resources, including improved community ownership and responsibility through existing or new associations, maintenance committees and users-groups/associations. Expenditures of \$37,500 to \$75,000 expected per community.



*Results to Date:*

By December 31, 2004, CAIP communities have completed or are implementing a total of 175 infrastructure projects in communities, reaching 643,974 beneficiaries. Total project value is \$4,929,899, of which 38 percent is community match. The majority of infrastructure projects will be finished by mid-December 2004, with a few continuing until the end of March, 2005. In addition, over 320 social projects have been conducted within the 136 Mercy Corps CAIP communities.

## Infrastructure Projects Completed or Under Implementation as of December 31, 2004, by Country

	TAJ	UZB	TKM	KYR	Total	Notes
Expected	170	113	0	8	291	Suspension of TKM program Project costs are inherently less in Tajikistan, allowing for more projects with equal funds
Achieved	302	147	0	17	466	
Deviation	+132	34	0	+9	175	

The main categories of CAIP infrastructure projects are provision of electricity, asphaltting of roads, repair and remodeling of schools, drinking water systems, irrigation water systems, community centers and gas lines. Extensive community outreach is conducted by CAGs to assure high participation rates in community meetings where projects are selected.

Once a project is selected, a sustainability plan is developed. Mercy Corps has found that not all of these plans have been effectively carried out. Some have faced unexpected difficulties, while others have not been realistic. Consequently, Mercy Corps is working with the communities' Sustainability Support Groups and Project Implementation Teams to revised plans as needed and to assure that strong community leadership is in place for follow through.

In addition, all CAIP communities implemented social projects during the quarter, some of which were partially supported by USAID/Mercy Corps, and many of which were not.

### Highlights of Community Projects

- During the implementation of a school rehabilitation project in Gidrostroytel, CAG members from the community approached the Shartuz hokimiyat in hopes of obtaining additional funds and material contribution for the project. The Chief of the hokimiyat was so inspired by the project that, during the opening ceremony, he allocated additional funds for the provision of furniture for the school.
- In the Andijon area of Uzbekistan, the Ahmadali Hoji community was having difficulty with the trash collection project. The CAG went to the hokimiyat requesting assistance and now have a system in place which provides public containers and regular collection of the trash.
- A community in Uchkuprik had no place for people to gather, with the exception of the mosque, which did not allow women to participate most of the time. Community members were concerned that their youth would fall prey to illegal and/or unhealthy activities if the community did not offer a viable place for youth to gather. A well-attended public meeting on November 14, 2004 resulted in a community decision to construct a new community center. The center was constructed in record time, only 80 days, and offers a youth activities room, youth trainers' room, meeting hall, women's room, aksakals' room, and a first aid room. All of this was accomplished due to the high level of contribution and involvement by the community: a schedule of hashar days was posted on the community's transparency board and even the school children participated in the construction process.
- The Mahzavod community in Kyrgyzstan was cold in the winter due to an old, faulty transformer substation. Since there is an absence of gas in the community, access to

electricity is very important. Conflicts arose in the community when some households had it and others did not. At a CAIP consensus seminar, the CAG and community members worked together to develop a plan for a second transformer substation. The mayor of Kyzyl Kia was so impressed with the plan that he provided twelve reinforced stands for high voltage lines and a crane for installation of the transformer and stands. The second transformer provides electrical power to 180 households and has increased the dependability and electrical supply to the first substation and those already connected, thus removing a source of tension and conflict within the community.

- Three Mercy Corps CAIP communities participated in the NGO Fair organized by the IREX-funded Civil Society Support Center in Garm. CAG representatives from Yaldamich, Garm, and Navobod spoke about projects that their communities had completed with the help of USAID/Mercy Corps. Those projects include: repair of heating system in school #23, repair of eleven transformers, construction of a computer classroom, and reconstruction of a community maternity center. The communities were extremely proud of their collaboration in CAIP and, as one representative put it, "the program has allowed community members to realize what they are capable of and has given them the confidence to pursue projects without outside support."

### **Self-Initiated Projects in CAIP Communities**

The highlight of this quarter's infrastructure projects was the increasing number of projects being self-initiated within Mercy Corps CAIP communities. As CAGs and their larger communities improve their relationships with their local governments, increase their confidence in their ability to create a better quality of life, and gain hope and enthusiasm about the future, they are implementing social and infrastructure projects without the assistance of USAID/Mercy Corps. Mercy Corps is aware of 381 non-donor supported projects that have been completed by Mercy Corps CAIP communities since learning CAIP processes. Some examples identified during this quarter include: clearing of water channels, health events, reconstruction of mosques, sports fields and community buildings, craft fairs, and gas and phone line installations.

### **Intermediate Result #3: Creation of sustainable and short-term jobs**

Improve the standard of living in CAIP communities through increased incomes and job opportunities. Communities will be better able to meet needs from own resources, leading to decrease in potential for conflict.

*Expected Results over the three-year life of CAIP:*

At least 75 communities will benefit from increased or sustained job opportunities and incomes through the development of infrastructure projects and participation in community economic development projects.

### **Overview of the Quarter**

In partnership with community members and national partners, economic development teams in Uzbekistan have completed seven projects and are currently implementing six on-going projects over the last three months. In Tajikistan, during the last quarter, 16 projects have been

completed and teams were implementing five on-going projects. During this quarter projects have provided direct benefit to 3,554 people in Uzbekistan and 4,941 in Tajikistan. Total jobs created through all Mercy Corps CAIP activities since the beginning of the program through December 31, 2004 are as follows:

	<b>Uzbekistan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>
Short-term jobs created by Infrastructure projects	1,200	30	1,300
Long-term jobs created by infrastructure grant projects	110	10	300
Long-term jobs created by business grant projects	170	6	565

Tables detailing economic development projects may be found in Appendix 3 of this report.

As the end of CAIP approaches, teams are now focusing on key sub-sectors that will provide the most sustainable long-term economic and employment impact. On-going projects have trained a network of extension agents to support Ferghana Valley greenhouse development, and loans and training continue to support the livestock sector in Tajikistan.

Projects promoting entrepreneurship and vocational education for youth have strengthened with the integration of teacher training for vocational educators and the equipping and renovation of school vocational facilities. In the Rasht Valley of Tajikistan, students and teachers of Junior Achievement have come together for a regional Olympiad to reinforce and celebrate their new knowledge of business. Also this quarter the CAIP Uzbekistan Women's Forum provided an ideal opportunity to support income-generating activities by women with a three-day intensive training by Junior Achievement.



In this quarter, three teams of extension agents were trained to support greenhouse development in the three regions of the Ferghana Valley. Pictured are extension agents working with trainers to transplant Tomato seedlings.

As we prepare for the last four months of CAIP, teams are working with businesses, communities, and local and international partners on sustainable innovative approaches that will expand services to business and put in place needed infrastructure. For greenhouses this means reducing dependency on natural gas with more energy efficiency and exploring the use of biogas for heating. In Tajikistan, this includes working with a local veterinary clinic in Shartuz to provide artificial insemination services for livestock farmers. In Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Batken oblast of Kyrgyzstan, Mercy Corps will continue to replicate master and mentor programs that build the capacity of small businesses to employ and train youth\*.

\* Criteria for selection of youth participants in this program ensure that the most vulnerable youth participants are targeted; this includes youth who do not have the opportunity for additional study and are currently unemployed.



Two young women participate in job training as a part of the Master Apprentice Employment program in Rishton, Uzbekistan. The young women received employment and training for three months. CAIP supported five master tailors by purchasing new equipment allowing them to expand their own businesses and provide training services to the young women.

### **Economic Development Impact Highlights**

The projects outlined below demonstrate the commitment Mercy Corps and communities have made to designing projects that will have long lasting impact in CAIP and surrounding communities.

#### ***Integrated Nutrition Promotion and Greenhouse Development and Extension Program***

This spring six CAIP and numerous surrounding communities will benefit from training and other agriculture extension services to be offered by the new field extension agents who are part of a network of agents to serve Ferghana Valley, Uzbekistan. The field agents will work from six energy efficient demonstration greenhouses built as a part of the program. The need for the program was highlighted by a baseline survey in the six communities showing that only 50 percent of greenhouses are profitable. With the sector continuing to grow to meet the demand for winter vegetables many start-ups and existing greenhouses lack the technical assistance to sustain profitable greenhouse operations. The Greenhouse Development and Extension Program is building the foundation for addressing this problem and offering market-driven services to farmers.

In addition to its work on promoting extension services to farmers, Mercy Corps has also identified a key link between the basic nutrition needs of communities and winter diets. In a baseline survey conducted by trained youth surveyors, 180 residents in six CAIP and three non-CAIP communities provided information regarding their diets and perceptions of nutrition. The survey showed that while in the summer and autumn 100 percent of respondents have fresh fruit or vegetables daily that this falls to less than one in five in the winter and early spring. One in four respondents have fruits and vegetables only once a month or less. The results of the survey also showed that a number of residents have minimal awareness of anemia and its effects on pregnant women.

In a dual effort to increase nutrition during the winter months and to increase the income potential and demand for greenhouse vegetables, economic officers, field agents and youth nutrition volunteers will lead a campaign to raise not only the supply of healthy vegetables in the winter months but to increase the nutritional knowledge of residents of the target communities. Mercy Corps staff and local volunteers will promote the healthy benefits of eating fruits and

vegetables and also increasing the demand for greenhouse products using a series of focus groups and printed materials at bazaars and other points of purchase.

### ***Master Apprentice Employment Programs***

Since piloting a Master Apprentice programs in two communities in the spring of 2004, Mercy Corps has continued to develop the criteria for selection of masters and apprentices and other program aspects. In the past quarter this experience has continued to lead to successful programs that provide youth with employment and job skills, as well as improving the existing capacity of master businesses. Initially focused on textiles, the programs have now expanded to include carpentry and theater production.

### ***Market Based Skills and Real World Experience for Youth and Educators***

CAIP is providing schools with the tools needed to provide youth with employable skills by equipping and renovating vocational classrooms. The next key step though is to provide vocational teachers with up-to-date curriculum and methodology that will allow students to apply these skills when seeking employment. In cooperation with MBM Group, Mercy Corps is providing intensive training and coaching to a group of ten labor market teachers. The program provides teachers with hands-on curriculum development and other training and follows up with in class coaching. The combination of better classrooms and training for teachers will ultimately benefit students about to enter the job market.

### ***Developing New Products in the Honey Sector***

The quote from the of the Navobod Beekeepers Association illustrates the positive effects of opening a wax paper production facility in the Rasht Valley. Building on this success, Mercy Corps, in cooperation with local training partners, is now providing management and marketing training to beekeepers. The development of new products and markets for beekeepers in Rasht Valley will continue to provide employment and income to current and future generations of beekeepers. The success of the project has led to a similar project now being conducted in Uzbekistan.

#### ***Sweet Success***

“This is not just significant for me, or my village, or even the association. This is important to the entire region! We are making honey a sustainable way to make a living. We are training others, building partnerships with other beekeepers, and running a business. This was unimaginable years ago.”

-- Chairman of the Navobod Beekeepers Association on the completion and opening of a wax paper production facility that will provide a key input to thousands of beekeepers in the Rasht Valley of Tajikistan.

### **Other Highlights from the Quarter**

#### ***Building Sustainable Partners for Economic Development, USAID and National Partners Conference***

USAID CAIP partners and national organizations visited project sites and discussed a number of issues around job creation and development of sustainable systems and environments to promote job creation. The three-day conference provided national and international partners with detailed information about approaches and has lead to continued cooperation. Representatives from CHF, ACDI-VOCA, Mercy Corps, DED, Junior Achievement, MBM Group, Oriyon, NABWT, and others participated in the three-day conference.

### ***Business Development Fund, Tajikistan***

The positive impact of microfinance loans in Khatlon and Rasht regions of Tajikistan continues to grow, with the total number of clients reaching 456. The total portfolio now held by Oriyon and NABWT for CAIP clients has grown to \$452,000. On average, each loan has produced nearly two new jobs for local residents.

### ***Opportunities for the Next Quarter***

Mercy Corps economic teams will continue to focus on expanding services and infrastructure to small businesses and farmers for the remainder of CAIP. Each infrastructure team, including the CAIP team working in Batken, Kyrgyzstan, will be developing economic projects in their communities during the last quarter.

#### **Tajikistan:**

The economic team in Khatlon will be working closely with the staff and community of a veterinary clinic to finalize and implement a project in artificial insemination for livestock. The project will be in addition to the lending and animal husbandry already conducted and to be continued in the region. In addition, Khatlon will be part of an overall effort to explore the concept of biogas as an energy source. Actual implementation of a biogas project will depend on the ability to identify local expertise for the project. A Winrock Farmer to Farmer specialist has been requested to visit the region and provide training and technical assistance. Additionally in Khatlon, Mercy Corps will continue to work with NABWT (National Association of Business Women) to provide microfinance and training to small businesses.

In the Rasht Valley region, economic officers will work with local residents to complete the renovation of the regional bazaar and training with sellers. Facility teams will focus on development of new products for honey producers and further management and marketing training, now that the wax paper production facility has opened. Oriyon will continue to make loans from the CAIP Business Development fund.

#### **Uzbekistan:**

In Uzbekistan teams will focus on expanding Master Apprentice programs to more communities, completing renovations of vocational classrooms and completing a teacher training program with labor teachers. Major projects will be completed in the area soil testing, honey production and extension services for farmers. Economic officers will also continue linking farmers to much needed agriculture equipment with alternative financing through leasing incentive programs.

#### **Kyrgyzstan:**

Mercy Corps economic officers will support the CAIP team in Kyrgyzstan to develop its first economic development projects. The projects are expected to be youth focused and will likely be Master Apprentice Youth employment programs.

## ***Challenges and Opportunities in CAIP***

### **Government Regulations and Scrutiny**

The greatest challenge in the last quarter has been in maintaining and developing partnerships with local organizations. Increased scrutiny of local nonprofits and other organizations working with international partners has made these organizations less willing to work in partnership on projects.

The Mercy Corps BDS (Business Development Services) strategy relies on local organizations to provide sustainable services to key sub-sectors of the local economy. In particular, activities with Junior Achievement of Uzbekistan have been greatly reduced due to the unwillingness and inability of Junior Achievement to work within the official banking system. Increased scrutiny by local officials and stringent release of funds by banks makes any substantial project activities, other than those conducted by bank transfer, not feasible. While some organizations are willing to work in this way with a substantial add on to fees for a variety of taxes increasingly fewer want the exposure the contracts with international organizations bring. Mercy Corps offices have also had visitors from local and district government offices of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan requesting documentation about projects, contractors, and partners.

Mercy Corps has recently signed a four-month teacher training contract with MBM Group to support its sustainable vocational centers through a comprehensive teacher training and coaching program but the overall outlook is less favorable. The ability to improve vocational education and entrepreneurship programs for youth has been drastically limited by the inability of Mercy Corps to work more closely with Junior Achievement of Uzbekistan.

In addition, intensified and new regulations on small scale agriculture producers and market traders have led not only to the recent violent outbursts but also greatly contributed to the sense of hopelessness and anger. This means that fewer and fewer entrepreneurs are willing to work within the system to start or expand small businesses. This continues to add to a growing black market economy, not only for illegal goods but also in nearly every transaction.

### **Working with Youth**

Mercy Corps has experienced great success in working with youth throughout the project period, but particularly during this past quarter. Many youth CAG members and youth community group members have optimized the opportunities available to them through participation in CAIP trainings, events, and participatory methodologies.

#### ***Youth Exchange between CHF, Counterpart International and Mercy Corps***

Mercy Corps partnered with World Bank to sponsor youth exchanges between CAIP communities in Central Asia. The first exchange in December 2004 was hosted by Mercy Corps in Ferghana City, and included participants from Counterpart International, Mercy Corps and Community Habitat Finance CAIP communities. The youth displayed leadership and community awareness throughout their interactions at the exchange. They wrote and performed short vignettes to prompt discussion about the nature of communities in which they live. The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan wrote an article about the event, which may be found here in Appendix 4.

### ***Kyrgyzstan CAG Member Shows Leadership and Helps Youth***

A CAG member of Uchkurgon took advantage of the business and organizational skills she learned through her involvement with CAIP to start a youth club in her community. The club provides classes in sewing, computers, English language, and dance.

### ***Skilled Youth Get Hired as a Result of Skills Learned at Summer Institute***

In Margilon, Uzbekistan, Mashkira, a young woman who attended the Mercy Corps CAIP Summer Youth Institute, excelled in her ability to practice conflict mitigation skills. As a result, she had the confidence to go to the high school from which she had recently graduated and offer her services. The school hired her to teach conflict mitigation to students and teachers, as well as to serve as a mediator when problems occur.

At the same Youth Institute, Manzura, from Haqulobod, learned how to conduct job research and match unemployed people to jobs. She was so proactive in her community and successful in placements, that the labor department of the local government office hired her to train employees on job research and data collection.

### ***Young Entrepreneurs in Tajikistan***

During a recent monitoring visit to assess the results of the Mercy Corps CAIP sponsored Junior Achievement Program, the CAIP Economic Development Officer discovered that not only are the students receiving education on business development, they are also putting their new knowledge to the test. Four ninth-grade students from School #1 in Shartuz have opened a Music and Video Rental Shop in the center of town with money raised by the students. The students' teacher assists the young entrepreneurs with accounting procedures and other technical expertise. She uses the store to illustrate the business challenges and lessons for other students in the Junior Achievement class.



## **CAG CURRICULUM**

### **1. Development Principles**

- a.* What is international development?
- b.* Mercy Corps: goals, programs around the world, mission statement;
- c.* International NGOs – who are the NGOs working in this region?
- d.* USAID – goals, programs in the area, mission statement;
- e.* Values/principles – what are the main principles of international development?
- f.* Civil society framework.

### **2. Transparency and Accountability**

- a.* Mercy Corps mode – how do we promote transparency and accountability?
  - i.* Finance and accounting procedures;
  - ii.* Rehabilitation process;
  - iii.* Procurement;
- b.* Transparency boards;
- c.* CAG accountability;
- d.* Principles of accountability and transparency.

### **3. The Value of Public Meetings**

- a.* Role of public meetings in the community;
- b.* Skills for holding large public meetings;
- c.* What makes a good meeting?
- d.* When you should hold a large public meeting.

### **4. Community Participation/Mobilization**

- a.* What is community mobilization?
- b.* Interaction between community-government-business;
- c.* Representation: how do you ensure representation? Why is it important?

- d.* Civic participation;
- e.* Grassroots mobilization;
- f.* CBOs.

## **5. Conflict Resolution Skills**

- a.* Community mediation;
- b.* Family to family mediation.

## **6. Sustainable Communities**

- a.* Community Plan;
- b.* Resources;
- c.* Working with local government;
- d.* Advocacy.

**TRAININGS FOR CAIP COMMUNITIES UZBEKISTAN**

*From August 2002 to December 2004*

<b>#</b>	<b>Name of training</b>	<b># of trainings</b>	<b># of beneficiaries</b>
1	Community Development	19	481
2	Transparency and Accountability	17	370
3	Public Meetings	22	1422
4	Creation of Water Users Association	1	20
5	Community-Driven Development	1	15
6	Trainings for the school teachers for Beshkapa community	2	60
7	Mobilization	12	178
8	Conflict Mitigation	3	87
9	Mentoring	1	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>2693</b>



## ***TRAININGS FOR CAIP COMMUNITIES -- YOUTH UZBEKISTAN***

***From August 2002 to December 2004***

<b>#</b>	<b>Name of training</b>	<b># of trainings</b>	<b># of beneficiaries</b>	<b>Local org-n/Mercy Corps</b>	<b>Inter. Org.</b>
1	Presentation skills	1	52	MC	
2	Communication with local and international youth sport organizations	1	100	MC, Kamolot	PSI, IREX, DVV
3	Social projects	1	13	MC	
4	Mobilization	1	16	MC	
5	Journalism	1	16	MC	
6	Volunteerism	1	18	MC	
7	Health education	31	934	30 CAIP Youth Participants	PSI
8	HIV/AIDS	6	570	CAIP Youth Participants	
9	Conflict mitigation	27	695	27 CAIP Youth Participants	
10	Business education	21	330	20 CAIP Youth Participants	
11	Labor market research	18	380	17 CAIP Youth Participants	
12	Mentoring	10	320	MC	
13	Trainings on health and sport for the school pupils of Honobod city and Ferghana oblast, Uzbekistan district	4	1.000		ZdravPlus SHEP
<b>Total</b>		<b>123</b>	<b>4.444</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>

## CLUSTER PROJECTS AND CLUSTER COMMUNITIES

From August 2002 to January 2005

#	Teams	# of cluster projects	# of cluster communities
1	Namangan 1 <sup>st</sup>	5 projects	4 communities and all communities in Kosonsoy city
2	Namangan 2 <sup>nd</sup>	6 projects	10 communities
3	Andijon	5 projects	9 communities
4	Ferghana		13 communities
5	Kokand		14 communities
<b>Total</b>		<b>16 projects</b>	<b>50 communities and all communities in Kosonsoy city</b>

**Appendix 3: Economic Development Projects from October 1-December 31, 2004**

**Quarterly Project Overview Economic Development, CAIP Uzbekistan Completed**

<i>Project #</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Employment</i>
UZB-26-E021	Leasing Incentive Program	30	2 Short-term 2 Long-term
UZB-26-E023	Leasing Incentive Program	25	3 Short-term 3 Long-term
UZB-01-E24	Technical Assistance to Ferghana Fruit Growers	25	1 Short-term
UZB-01-E028	Women's Forum Training for Fledgling Businesses	25	2 Short-term 25 Long-term
UZB-01-E26	Building Sustainable Partnerships, Conference	35	3 Short-term
UZB-01-E030	Ferghana Beekeepers Association, Honey Holiday Conference	500	3 Short-term
UZB-01-E030	Master Apprentice Tailor Youth Employment Program	25	2 Short-term 25 Long-term

**Q4 2004 Totals:**

**Projects Completed: 7**

**Total Beneficiaries: 616**

**Women: 107**

**Men: 509**

**Youth\*: 65**

**Employment Creation:            Short-Term: 16                            Long-term: 55**

\*Men and women under the age of 25

**Quarterly Project Overview Economic Development, CAIP Uzbekistan Financial**

<i>Project</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>USAID CAIP</i>	<i>Community Contribution</i>
UZB-26-E021	Leasing Incentive Program	\$4,660	\$500
UZB-26-E023	Leasing Incentive Program	\$4,639	\$500
UZB-01-E24	Technical Assistance to Ferghana Fruit Growers	\$2,175	
UZB-01-E028	Women's Forum Training for Fledgling Businesses	\$480	
UZB-01-E26	Building Sustainable Partnerships, Conference	\$3,042	

UZB-01-E030	Ferghana Beekeepers Association, Honey Holiday Conference	\$940	\$3,000
UZB-01-E030	Master Apprentice Tailor Youth Employment Program	\$2,517	\$1,200
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$18, 453</b>	<b>\$5,200</b>
		<b>82%</b>	<b>28%</b>

***On-Going Projects, CAIP Economic Development, Uzbekistan  
(Projects to be completed in upcoming quarter)***

The following projects were initiated and have been implemented during the last quarter and will be completed during the first quarter of 2005. The beneficiaries and employment are actual-to-date unless otherwise stipulated as projected.

<b><i>Project #</i></b>	<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Beneficiaries</i></b>	<b><i>Employment</i></b>
UZB-01-E029	Greenhouse Extension and Development Program	15	6 Short-term 6 Long-term
UZB-01-E032	Integrated Nutrition Marketing Program, Greenhouse Production	118	18 Short-term 18 Long-term
UZB-01-E033	Labor Education Teacher Enrichment Program	10	2 Short-term
UZB-18-E034	Vocational Education Support Project-Cluster Project-Buston	1,711 (students and teachers at school)	5 Short-term
UZB-16-E035	Master Apprentice Carpenter Youth Employment Program	310 (students and teachers at school)	10 Short-term 1 Long-term
UZB-18-E036	Vocational Education Support Project-Vodil	774 (students and teachers at school)	5 Short-term

**Q4 2004 Totals:**

**On-Going Projects: 6**  
**Total Beneficiaries: 2,938**  
**Women: 1,587**  
**Men: 1,351**  
**Youth\*: 1,108**

**Employment Creation: Short-Term: 46 Long-term: 25**

\*Men and Women under the age of 25

**Quarterly Project Overview Economic Development, CAIP Tajikistan Completed**

<b>Project # Employment</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	
TAJ 202 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	25	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 206 E05	Start and improve your business (training)	25	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 207 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 212 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	25	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 103 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	25	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 108 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 109 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 109 E02	Start and improve your business (training)	25	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 117 E01	Wax-paper production workshop – Association of Beekeepers of Navobod	3500	4 Short-term 4 Long-term
TAJ 119 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 121 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 121 E02	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 121 E03	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 121 E04	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 121 E05	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term
TAJ 122 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	30	1 Short-term 0 Long-term

**Q4 2004 Totals:**

**Projects Completed: 16**

**Total Beneficiaries: 3,895**

**Employment Creation: Short-Term: 19**

**Long-term: 4**

**Quarterly Project Overview Economic Development, CAIP Tajikistan  
Financial**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>USAID CAIP</b>	<b>Community Contribution</b>
TAJ 202 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	\$497.50	\$0.00
TAJ 206 E05	Start and improve your business (training)	\$499.50	\$30.00
TAJ 207 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$570.00	\$30.00
TAJ 212 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	\$497.00	\$30.00
TAJ 103 E01	Start and improve your business (training)	\$507.00	\$30.00
TAJ 108 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$570.00	\$30.00
TAJ 109 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$570.00	\$30.00
TAJ 109 E02	Start and improve your business (training)	\$527.50	\$30.00
TAJ 117 E01	Wax-paper production workshop – Association of Beekeepers of Navobod	\$27,377.00	\$9,532.00
TAJ 119 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$570.00	\$30.00
TAJ 121 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$560.00	\$30.00
TAJ 121 E02	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$560.00	\$30.00
TAJ 121 E03	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$560.00	\$30.00
TAJ 121 E04	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$560.00	\$30.00
TAJ 121 E05	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$560.00	\$30.00
TAJ 122 E01	Increasing productivity of livestock and processing of animal products (training)	\$570.00	\$30.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$35,556.00</b>	<b>\$9,952.00</b>
		<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>

**On-Going Projects, CAIP Economic Development, Tajikistan  
(Projects will be completed in upcoming quarter)**

The following projects were initiated and have been implemented during the last quarter and will be completed during the first quarter of 2005. The beneficiaries and employment are actual-to-date unless otherwise stipulated as projected.

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Beneficiaries Employment</b>	
TAJ 201 E02	Construction of Shartuz central market	120	39 Short-term 80 Long-term
TAJ 207 E02	Provision of Tractor MTZ-82 to the Association of Invalids "Dilsuz" of Beshkent	350	6 Short-term 2 Long-term

TAJ 101 E03	Construction of Rasht Central Market	120	8 Short-term 60 Long-term
TAJ 200 E01	NABWT Business Development Fund	196	0 Short-term 258 Long-term
TAJ 100 E01	ORIYON Business Development Fund	260	0 Short-term 274 Long-term

**Q4 2004 Totals:**

**Projects On-going: 5**

**Total Beneficiaries: 1,046**

**Women: 400**

**Men: 646**

**Youth\*: 320**

**Employment Creation:      Short-Term: 53      Long-term: 674**



## Appendix 4: Newsletter

**The newsletter of  
Business Women Associations of Uzbekistan  
" Business Women "  
Supported by the International Bank for  
Reconstruction and Development / World Bank**

**Working with Communities:  
Inhabitants of communities have learned to solve common problems together**

The round table *Participation of Youth in Decision-making Processes* supported by World Bank and Mercy Corps/USAID, was held at the Hotel Asia on December 15, 2004. The participants of the meeting are active young women and men aged 25 years or younger; they are representatives from CAIP (Community Action Investment Program) communities and also NGO and initiative groups who participate in the small grants program of the World Bank. CAIP Mercy Corps implements projects in the Ferghana Valley. CHF International and Counterpart International are implementing their projects in partnership. The purpose of this meeting is to promote an experience exchange and establish links between communities that want to improve living conditions.

This exchange visit is different from others. The participants from Ferghana Valley communities presented lessons as theatre pieces. They portrayed mothers, matchmakers and brides in tea ceremony to discuss themes such as: decision-making in communities, involving local authorities in development process of communities, involving local youth in decision-making process, changes in communities, and sustainability methods.

One of the distinguishing features of the CAIP Program in Ferghana Valley is its focus on working with youth. Youth and women councils have been created, where participants could express and promote their interests. According to the requirements of the Program, the financial contribution of communities in implementing projects is 30 percent of its real cost.

How do youth participate in CAIP? Adila Tadjibaeva, Mercy Corps's officer tasked with Youth and Women involvement explains, "Youth participate in realization of the projects from the beginning till the end. They hold meetings and hashars and work with vendors/contractors. Some of the youth do the most difficult work voluntary."

The interest of youth was so great, that the leaders of youth committees offered to hold a forum for representatives from all of 30 communities, where CAIP is being implemented.

Mercy Corps supported this initiative. 14 leaders from youth committees were included to the committee, which was prepared as a forum. Forum participants were selected by committee according to their letters of interest. Youth from Tajikistan and also representatives from other international organizations were also invited to a forum. The forum which was held in February, 2004, gave an opportunity for participants to exchange their experiences and to work out a strategic plan for communities. After the forum, competitions, discos, and soccer games began between communities, and youth centers and clubs opened as well - all without Mercy Corps' participation or money.

Shortly thereafter a summer camp "Youth Skills Development Institute" was held on August 6-14, 2004 in republican sanatorium "Chimion" of the Ferghana region. More than 130 people from 30 CAIP communities of the Ferghana Valley participated at the camp. The purpose of the camp is to develop skills on the labor market, basics of economy and business, conflict mitigation, and health.

There were many successes. For example, two months later the researchers had found employment for 236 people for short-term and long-term jobs. Today the number is 276.

We then visited three communities, where the CAIP projects are being implementing. The first visit was to the Takalik community of Yazyavan region (750 inhabitants). During the question-answer period, inhabitants of the community conveyed that every month each family gives 200 soums to a community fund that supports previously implemented projects such as: a repaired school and canteen, a sewing shop, gas line installation, and others. The community with the support of Mercy Corps submitted a project for DFID (Department For International Development of Great Britain) and won grant to create a sewing shop. The grant covered costs for equipment, furniture, and salary for a master tailor.

18 year old Muhayo Kurisheva, one of the eight apprentices, says, "Income was low, but after the New Year sewing shop plans to make contract with kindergartens to sew bed-clothes, and work will increase. Now I'm a tailor, and hold tailors' courses in neighboring communities."

Then organizers brought us to "Galatoy" community (4,100 people) of Margilon city, where construction was underway for a community guzar. Youth and women committees will have separate and comfortable rooms. Community meetings will be held in hall upon completion. Sojida Otaboeva, community secretary, says:

"Community had planned five projects. First community members decided to implement projects for children. Lavatories and fence for sport square were built. Then they started to implement other projects. Adults insisted on reconstruction of old community center but youth insisted on building a new one. So, disagreements began, and youth committee showed adults that there is no point to reconstruct the old one. They proved it's necessary to build new community center. After that all agreed. Before the CAIP project community inhabitants were separate, but today the have learned to listen to each other and solve their problems together."

The next was "Qozi Ahror" community (2,380 people) of Rishtan region. Here projects were being implemented on asphaltting roads, electrification, and construction of a community center.

We met with community members near a beautiful pond. But when we've heard that community members drink this water and there no clean water to drink our romantic feelings flew away. From researchers' results we knew that clean water is under the ground about 180-260 meters depth. And the nearest clean water source is about 50 km, that's why people have to drink dirty water from channels that flow from Kyrgyzstan.

Why did community choose asphaltting instead of the water problem? Dilorom Rahmatullaeva, member of the committee, answers, "We have another two new communities, with no roads and electricity. Besides, we are used to drinking this water."

How about youth participation in community mobilization? Mirzayahyo Hasanov answers, "Before was difficult to wake up community. And youth played an important role to make people understand change. They were agitators. Day by day people began working together. Now we want to take a micro credit loan and open a ceramics shop."

Reported by Ilona Ilyasova.