

Youth Mean Business



EFCA strengthens the capacity of young people in order to give them opportunity to lead initiatives aimed at the sustainable development of their local communities. While our previous program, the YouthBanks for Issyk-Kul Project, is focused on social development, the Youth Mean Business Project focuses on economic development through income generating activities. The project aims to engage youth groups who are residents of the Issyk-Kul southern shore area (from Balykchy to Typ). The first project component targets youth motivated to start their own businesses, whereas the second component will concentrate on youth searching for employment in existing businesses in the region. The project is financed by Kumtor Company; the main partners are local self-governments and the YouthBanks of Issyk-Kul.

Context

The youth of the Issyk-Kul region face a large number of challenges. Due to a lack of employment opportunities, they struggle to contribute to the social and economic prosperity of their communities, and hence their integration into local society is difficult.

This lack of economic opportunities has led to intensified youth urban migration, leaving this rural area with virtually no educated and motivated young people – a potentially vital resource, which could contribute to the creation of a functioning and viable area for business development.

Even though youth are willing and motivated to develop businesses in the area, they lack specific skills, knowledge, finance and investment opportunities that would allow them to plan and implement sustainably.



Goal and objectives

The project aims to empower youth to take responsibility for, and actively contribute to the Issyk-Kul region's economic prosperity. The project will achieve its main goal by accomplishing two main objectives:

- to create and strengthen opportunities for youth to succeed in business development and self-employability initiatives;
- to increase contacts in the local job market to promote youth employment and career opportunities.

The needs assessment conducted by EFCA in the Issyk-Kul region provides clear evidence that youth could present feasible business ideas leading to economic and community development. These ideas are in line with existing value chains and are especially related to agriculture, eco-tourism, processing and construction.

Activities

The Project focuses on two components: business creation and employability. The project aims, first, to provide motivated youth with skills and practical tools to start their own business.

This business development approach is based on community needs, existing value chains and youth professional competencies. New businesses will also create new opportunities for other youth in the region who are searching for employment near their homes, and will in turn decrease youth migration.

Business development trainings and a business plan competition are organized in order to strengthen entrepreneurship in the region. The best business plans will be funded, with co-financing from their authors.

In order to promote youth employment, in the second component of the project, we conduct special training workshops and a job fair. EFCA will facilitate the exchange of information and create a web platform allowing for easy job advertisements for employers in the area and will facilitate job search for unemployed youth. Internships opportunities for young people will also be created.



Outcomes and expected achievements

Under the first objective:

- mentors recruited to be responsible for matchmaking and ongoing small business support;
- 60 youth trained in business development;
- 17 business projects supported and financed.

Under the second objective:

- 80 youth trained, and improved employability skills;
- 80 youth provided with internships or apprenticeships;
- 1 internship/apprenticeship network established.

“We are typical village youth. We had little understanding of how we could develop our communities. We also did not know how to assess community needs and how to address them. We believe we have learnt many new things and can, and will continue to, apply them.”

Ulan, YouthBank Member from

EURASIA FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

115/1 Matrosova St., Bishkek,
Kyrgyz Republic, 720005

Tel: +996(312) 56-11-63

Fax: +996(312) 57-70-73

www.efca.kg