



SRO Moscow

Improved working and living conditions, health and safety in small scale farming (informal sector) using social dialogue, neighbourhood and self-development –

WIND

adapted in Kyrgyzstan and CIS countries

Agriculture in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has, differently to the other CIS countries, transformed its agriculture from big sovkoses and kolхозes into small private farmers. Presently there are approx 244,000 small farmers in the country of 5 million people. Agriculture produces 80 % of the GDP. In the present transitional phase (both economic transition and especially the change of the population's perception of the present economic and legal environment), the rights and duties of private farmers versus rights and duties of the government are very unclear. The small farmers still expect to receive support from the Government.

The huge disparity between successful farmers and subsistence farming is obvious. A successful farmer, owning several farms, over a hundred horses and over one thousand sheep, can earn up to 14,000 USD from the sale of one horse, whereas the majority of farmers who own or rent perhaps 3 hectares of land, have no machines and barely earn a living for a family of 6- 8 persons. The purchasing power of the population of agro-products can be exemplified with the fact that a retired medically trained civil servant receives 20 USD in monthly pension.



Although the word “collectivisation” still has a negative connotation, it is abundantly clear for practical farmers that cooperatives and joint collaboration are the only means to improve mechanisation and thus improve working conditions. The Kyrgyz tradition of “aschar”, neighbour assistance, makes it easier to promote cooperatives.

The foundation for the farmer's ability to improve working conditions is a living income. The agro-complex trade union has promoted new means and methods for small farmers to improve their earnings (acting as agriculture advisors for small subsistence farmers). The agro-complex trade union has a network reaching out to farmers in the informal sector and maintains a living contact with them.

Regulated producers' prices, tax reductions or micro-credits for creation of cooperatives or purchase of fertilisers or machinery are means through which the government or society can improve the basic income for farmers, and thus enable improvement of working conditions.

WIND

The ILO and local partner institutions in Viet Nam developed the Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development (WIND) programme, providing practical responses to working and living conditions and safety and health problems in agriculture. The manual is targeted directly to the rural population, with a very practical approach, clear and simple language, what-to-do checklists, drawings with practical solution and pictures of best practices.

The ILO Sub-Regional Office in Moscow started in May 2004 a project to adapt the WIND manual for use in Central Asia jointly with agricultural specialists and social partners in Kyrgyzstan. The project is executed and co-funded jointly with several ILO headquarters technical units: SECTOR, TRAVAIL, CIS, IPEC and GENDER. The project is cooperating with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).



Local experts

The ILO in Moscow started working with colleagues in the trade union for the agro-complex industry and the labour inspection (occupational safety and health information and training centre) in the Ministry of Labour in Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz colleagues created a work group with representatives from the agro-complex trade unions, Ministries of Labour, Agriculture, Health and Education, local administration (Aiyl Okmotu), micro-credit fund and NGOs dealing with rural, women's and gender issues. The group adapted the text of a draft Russian translation and rewrote and expanded one third of the manual. The drawings are redrawn and new photos of best practices have been included to fit into the situation in Central Asia. A review seminar, including the working group, small and big farmers and representatives of the Aiyl Okmotus, discussed and finalised the manual in September 2004.

The locally developed project concept and the manual were evaluated and agreed to in a major tripartite seminar held in October 2004. The first training of trainers' seminar was designed and executed by an NGO "ALGA", the experts of which assisted in the three other regional seminars. Around 120 trainers, trade union activists, labour inspectors, agricultural specialists and representatives from the local administration, participated in the seminars covering both the North and South part of the country.

The quiet time for farming in the winter (December 2004 - February 2005) was used for local training of small farmers. A trained activist invited 20-30 farmers from a local administration unit (Aiyl-Okmotu) for a day of training, providing them with 2-3 WIND manuals for future reference. About 40-50 local administrative units out of a total of 469 units will be covered in winter 2004-05.

Safety higher on the agenda of the social partners

The adaptation was done in close collaboration with the social partners. A working group comprising trade unions and employers, agricultural and education experts, women's organisations, etc. reviewed the manual (text, drawings and pictures) and its suitability to the Central Asian situation. The agro-complex trade union, with its close contacts with the small farmers and agricultural workers, soon became the driving force of the process.

The development process was trying to serve the needs of practical farmers as well as possible. The working group therefore sought the views and comments of practical farmers on the manual as well as on the training process.

In connection with the presentation and review of the final draft, a negotiation round was done with the relevant Ministries, employers' organisations and trade unions, leading to a high-level seminar on OSH in agriculture. In this process, the experience of the IUF was fully utilised in bringing safety in agriculture to the agenda of the social partners in a coherent and practical manner.

The high-level tripartite seminar in October 2004 agreed on a set of resolutions, which had been developed by the Ministry of Labour/Labour Inspection, the agro industrial complex trade unions, the preparatory discussions and the seminar discussions. The main outcome was to decide to set up a tripartite working group to prepare a State programme for OSH in agriculture on the basis of ILO Convention 184, focused on the following issues:

1. Improvement of normative base
2. Create a competent body
3. Creation of a Republican tri-partite council on OSH, with a commission for agriculture
4. Develop a national policy, with a special attention to implementation of the WIND programme
5. Set up tripartite structures for social dialogue at all levels with ILO support
6. Set up bipartite structures at enterprises
7. Develop a plan for information, education and training of specialists under an Information and Training Centre on OSH. A request to ILO for support for printing of WIND manuals and ILO Agrochemicals manual was included.
8. Improved accident statistics
9. Equal rights for agricultural worker compared with other sectors
10. Accident insurance
11. Stimuli for OSH activities

A high level meeting convened after the seminar with top officials from the Union of Confederation of Employers, agro industrial complex trade union and Ministry of Labour (CLI) reviewed the recommendations of the seminar. The resolutions were jointly approved and signed in a tripartite festive ceremony. A signed copy was ceremoniously handed to the ILO.

The Union of Confederation of Employers simultaneously announced their intention to create a Union (Komitet) for agricultural employers.

The consensus of the tripartite agreement was fully based on the long-term work of the Kyrgyz tripartite colleagues and can therefore be deemed to have very good prospects for sustainability. IUF made a valuable contribution in the intensive days of the seminar.

Time table

Kyrgyzstan approved in July 2003 a new OSH law and ratified the ILO Convention on OSH in agriculture, No. 184, in 2004.

The Ministry of Labour in Kyrgyzstan prepared a national OSH profile for the country in December 2003. The aim of the profile is to elaborate a national OSH programme with a plan of action.

The II Republican seminar on OSH in April 2004 pointed out that working conditions and social dialogue in agriculture need to be improved. Kyrgyzstan decided to start working on a WIND project.

Selection of partners and detailed planning with them started in Bishkek in April 2004, on the adaptation of the manual, mechanism for reaching agro-workers and small farmers. The Kyrgyz working group made the final draft during the summer months.

An extended experts meeting was held in Issey-Kul in September 2004 testing the manual and its implementation with farmers and local administration representatives. The technical content was finalised.

In October 2004 the manual was presented to the Ministries and social partners. A work plan and assigned tasks were agreed upon. The WIND project received full support by a high-level tripartite meeting on OSH in agriculture.

Regional training of trainers was organised for trade unions activists, labour inspectors and Aiyl Okmotu representatives. Two seminars were held in the North and two in the South, with 120 persons trained.

Training of small farmers and people in informal rural sector was organised in December 2004 - February 2005 during the low season in the winter.

Tentative plans 2005-2006

Dec 04 – mid Feb 2005	40 local one day training/implementation seminars with farmers in selected local admin units "aiyl-okmotus"
March-April 05	high level event promoting OSH in agriculture linked to World OSH Day 28 April
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> official launching & promotion of the Kyrgyz WIND programme with participation from SECTOR, TRAVAIL, CIS, ILO/MOW utilising mobile theatre group for promoting good working and living conditions in agriculture and the WIND approach (pending funding) approval of and seminar on national OSH programme in agriculture (based on Kyrgyz tentative plans)
April - Sept 05 "	OSH consultations for farmers in North Kyrgyzstan; NGO "ALGA"
2 nd part 2005	Review of WIND manual, upgrading and reprinting of 10,000 examples Production of promotion material (poster, leaflet, etc.)
Oct 05 - mid Feb 06	local training in winter period (for remaining 420 local admin units) pending funding (tripartite project proposal received for 20,000 USD for training and 9,000 USD for re-printing)



Future prospects

Uzbekistan has started work on a localized WIND manual, based on the modular course methodology, taking into account the higher mechanization level of the Uzbek agriculture.

Kazakhstan, Perm region and North West Russia have expressed interest in adapting the WIND manual to their situation.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are tentatively interested in improved safety among small farmers.

A Russian language version will be disseminated through the Virtual Academy of Safework (www.safework.ru) and on CD-ROMs to cater for the interest from different regions in Russia.