



Cultural Apricot Festival Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan



Financial support: KAWS, WECF, profits

Program: empowerment, economic and environmental sustainability

Project management and design: KAWS, WECF, local NGO's

Project partners: KAWS, WECF

Start of activities: 2012

Key Message

Women seek empowerment, and economic and environmental sustainability through the annual 'Kyzyl Oruk' cultural festival.



The 2014 Issyk Kul Apricot Festival

The Festival

Over 300 people attended the festival, including several international tourists which sparked hopes for future wishes to increase tourism in the area. The festival was organized by several local NGO's and funded by KAWS and WECF. Sustainable income is generated through the sale of tickets to tourists and through donations made by the festival-goers to contribute to next years festival and other cultural events. The festival is a part of a wider plan to develop eco, ethnic and agro-tourism in the southern part of Issyk Kul lake. The festival was focused on increasing the image of the Issyk Kul apricots and empowering women simultaneously.

The festival was a great success and a day enjoyed by all who attended. Although apricots were certainly the highlight of the festival, there were many activities, stalls and events to enjoy such as traditional music and dance performances, a costume parade, games, and various stalls selling locally made handicrafts, souvenirs, household items and organic products. Women farmers from Bokonbaev, Ton and Ak-Sai villages held master classes on processing fruits such as apricots, raspberries, buckthorn and honey, and demonstrated how to create several other products from these items. Many of these products were on exhibition and for sale at the festival. For women entrepreneurs the festival is a great time for not only presenting their products but also creating business relationships with new and existing customers and also the opportunity to meet new business partners.



Organic apricots grown in Issyk Kul

Background

On the 2nd August 2014 the 'Kyzyl Oruk' Apricot Festival in Issyk Kul took place for the 3rd year running. This annual event has become a new tradition in the area following the triumph of the first event. The festival incorporates cultural heritage and the opportunity to showcase agricultural products. Within the framework of the EWA project the festival is aimed at promoting sustainable development and the empowerment of women. EWA aims to empower women through assisting women in creating their own sustainable livelihood, and through this become empowered. The festival took place on the beautiful shores of Kekilik beach, Issyk Kul and was a great success.



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Results and Plans for the Future

Kyrgyzstan Sultan Sarygulov, a representative from the Federation of Organic Movement (FOD) gave a speech on the opportunities for organic farming in the area and praised the progress made so far. The areas wealth of traditional knowledge and the perfect environmental conditions have generated the successful cultivation of several types of apricots. This is enabling the production and processing of organic products as well as the development of sustainable eco and agro-tourism.

Looking towards the future, the organizers and local community have plans for expanding activities. In the following months the organizers will arrange meetings with several travel agencies working in the region to discuss increasing the visibility of the festival and other cultural events in the area. They hope to increase the amount of tourists visiting in order to support and empower the economic activities of women working within the EWA project framework in the villages on the southern coast of Issyk Kul.



Exhibition and sale of apricot products made from local apricots

“The festival empowers both women and the community through apricots and culture”

From top: national souvenirs and handmade items stall, dancing group from Bokonbaev village, children playing a nomadic game 'arkean tartysh'.

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