



## **COMMUNITY-BASED PASTURE CONSERVATION: A CASE OF KYRGYZSTAN**

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K A Z A K H S T A N

K Y R G Y Z S T A N

C H I N A

TASHKENT  
UZBEKISTAN

UZBEKISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

T A J I K I S T A N

DUSHANBE

Kara-Balta  
**BISHKEK**

Tokmok

Talas

Balykchy

Tyup

Karakol

Kyzyl-Suu

Kerben

Jalal-Abad

Baetov

Naryn

Kara-Say

Osh

Uzgen

Kyzyl-Kiya

Gulcha

Sary-Tash

Karamyk

Kapchagay Reservoir

Tekes

Issyk-Kul

Song Kol Lake

Naryn

Toshkan

Yarkand

Karakul

Vakhsh (Surkhob)



# Kyrgyzstan - country of celestial mountains: What is valued most by local people?

- ❖ More than 93% of the territory of Kyrgyzstan is occupied by mountain ridges of Tien-Shan and Pamir-Alay.
- ❖ Mountains are valued for its natural pastures with total area more than 9 million hectares. Out of all agricultural lands, 85% are natural pastures.
- ❖ 44% of the whole territory of the Kyrgyzstan is occupied by pastures.
- ❖ The average altitude of pastures is 2750 m above sea level. 1/3 of the them is located on the altitude from 400 to 3000 m above sea level.



# Traditional pasture management

- Mountain pastoral communities have accumulated a thousand-year experience of **year-round livestock farming** without harming the environment.
- **Due to the different altitudes, as well as the exposure of individual pasture areas, the vegetation on them occurs in different periods (from one month to 9-10 months)**, which historically determined the seasonal nature of pasture use.
- That is why local communities developed **original traditional land use systems** that have been substantially eroded over seventy years of Soviet Union through settlement, collectivization, and the industrialization of livestock production, followed by a chaotic transition to independence and the free market.
- As a result, many pasture users stopped moving their cattle to distant pastures, refusing in fact, traditional methods of moving cattle to pastures. Because of the useless attitude and unsystematic use, the process of **secondary degradation of pastures** has gone everywhere.

# Traditional pasture management

Seasonal pasture rotation: moving from one pasture to another according to 4 seasons: Djazdo'o/ koktom – spring pastures; Djailo'o – summer pastures; Kuzdo'o – autumn pastures; Kyshto'o – winter pastures.

Every seasonal pasture was used only for one season. This allowed to soil and plants to fully recover during all other seasons.



# Reasons of degradation of pastures/range lands

During the last 20 years more than 50% of pasture lands became degraded and depleted:

- ❖ Excessive pressure on the pastures;
- ❖ Unsystematic grazing leading to deterioration of grass;
- ❖ Increase in number of livestock;
- ❖ Irrational pasture management;
- ❖ Destruction of soil and its fertility;
- ❖ Local herders almost forgot traditional knowledge and traditional pasture management;
- ❖ As the result: depletion of biodiversity and losing our unique mountain landscapes.



# Cholpon rural municipality: description

- Located in the north of Kyrgyzstan in Inner Tien Shan mountains (Kochkor district of Naryn province). **1900-4000 m** above sea level
- The total area of the territory is 52,928 hectares, of which **49,386** hectares are pastures.
- The total population is **8,723** people. The total number of households is 1,624.
- A mountainous area with a very **fragile** natural environment.
- Average winter temperature **-15 °C** and in summer **+25 °C**
- Pastures are mainly **desert** and **semi-desert**
- As a result of excessive grazing, local pastures are **severely degraded**, which leads to a **deterioration** of ecosystem.

# Main Objective/Approaches:

- **Main objective** is to **empower local community members** and increase their resilience and adaptation to climate change through revival and preservation of traditional pastoralism practices in **Cholpon rural municipality**.
- **Main approaches/activities:** Introduction of community-based pasture conservation based on traditional knowledge and practices, interaction of all stakeholders to enhance the adaptive potential of the local population, including youth, to climate change by creation and development of the Community Climate Adaptation Center. Trainings for herds; Local festivals; Forum-Theaters with participation of school students & Street Theaters with involvement of local pasture users/villagers.
- **Community based conservation (CBC)** is a **strategy** to reinforce conservation initiatives led by self-governing communities based on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).
- Joint initiative of ISDS and Cholpon rural municipality/pasture users association promotes the CBC concept by involving local people/pasture users in **decision-making around pasture/natural resources management**.



# Results/Outcomes-1:

**Community Climate Change Adaptation Center** was created to revive traditional systems and climate adaptation strategies by **Participatory Rural Appraisal** approach to map traditional knowledge and practices reducing the vulnerability of the local community to the effects of climate change, reveal the available tools of collective solutions for climate change, and pasture management;

**Inventory and documenting** cattle and pastures to develop **pasture management & conservation strategy** and introduce it into practice;

**Revival of traditional knowledge** and customs of nomadic migration to remote pastures and conservation of pastures;

Local communities and pastoralists consider the balance between **scientific approach & traditional nature management and pasture ecosystem**;

The **herders** are equipped with traditional methods of nomadic movement and do not remain in the same place all season to support **plants recovering**;

**Collaborative strategies of pasture conservation** using traditional knowledge have long-term effect to improve the well-being of pasture users, while preserving and improving the condition of land resources

Community campaigns and public meetings to **systematize** traditional knowledge and **popularize** it among other pastoral committees in the region;

**Climate monitoring system** is integrated and revised based on the best practices of traditional pastoralism. Local pastoralists started using the knowledge and practices inherited from the experiences of their ancestors to sustainably maintain their livelihoods and improve their resilience to the impacts of climate change:

# Results/Outcomes-2:

- The herds moved from degraded pastures to the remote pasture on the Son-Kul Lake located on the altitude more than 3000 m above sea level. Before it was used only on 20% resulted in spreading uneatable herbs.
- Conservation started from 30 hectares (2016), then 900 (2017) and finally 9000 hectares (2018) conserved using CBC based on TK/practices.



# Contributions to the Aichi Biodiversity Target

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Indicator 1: People are aware of the values of biodiversity

Indicator 2: People are aware of the steps they can take to conserve

Indicator 3: Biodiversity values integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and sustainably use biodiversity

BEFORE (2015)

AFTER (2018)

- Local population were not aware of the values of biodiversity, viewed pastures as an inexhaustible resource, did not using traditional methods, the culture of using pastures and modern zootechnical methods, which led to the degradation of pastures.
- The majority of local population forgot traditional knowledge of pasture management

- Over 4,500 villagers informed about values of biodiversity, particularly about importance of revival of pastures based on traditional knowledge and practices.
- Over 100 school children learned more about local history, documented local legends and myths, now they become more concerned about pastures, wild and domesticated animals.

- Local people did not consider biodiversity values
- Local people were not aware of community-based conservation concept and kept dependent position on national government

- Biodiversity values/community-based pasture conservation issues included in local development plans in targeted areas of Naryn and Chuy provinces, particularly, 5-year plans of pasture use of rural municipalities.



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