



## AGRICULTURAL SKILLS TRAINING IN RURAL AREAS PROJECT

### KYRGYZSTAN

### Half yearly report

July 2012  
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**HELVETAS**  
Swiss Intercooperation

KYRGYZSTAN

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# 1. Executive Summary

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## 1.1. A-STAR in 2012

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During the reporting period 306 (out of them 53 are women) students successfully graduated and 345 (out of them 78 are women) are currently continuing their practical traineeship. 116 (out of them 51 are women) students successfully finished short-term modular courses on sewing, computer, English language, welding, veterinary, biogas installation techniques and mushroom growing. The project is so far on track of reaching the target set in the ProDoc of 1300 primary stakeholders entering skills training during the three-year's phase.

According to the Project Document the project is gradually decreasing its share in KOJO financing scheme, which should make the model more sustainable. Nevertheless the project makes quite intensive financial monitoring and coaching of all partners. Currently, all five KOJOs are operating well. In total all KOJOs have in their funds about 10'040'134 soms (173'105 EUR), which allows them to finance existing groups and more groups beyond 2012. Additional to state financing of the groups, four KOJOs have been selected to implement small grant scheme of EC financed project for 16'000 EUR. Good relations with the Peace Corps allowed the project to get new volunteer to support local partners in various aspects like fundraising, PR and communication. The volunteer will be mainly working in Balykchy office with frequent travelling to schools and KOJOs.

Additionally to 16 approved module packages in 2011, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training (AVET) has approved new 14 module packages (namely Goose raising, Turkey raising, Chicken raising, Horse raising, Haricot growing, Bee keeping, Duck raising, Stove/furnace construction, Setting up nursery/hot house, Agricultural food stuff storage, Plumbing works in rural house, Carpenter's work, Welding, Fruit and vegetable storage).

By autumn the translation of the packages will be finalized and they will be published. The project will work further on including them into the official list of occupations by the Ministry of Youth, Labor and Employment. All project partners (AVET, schools, KOJOs) have full set of module packages consisting of 30 titles.

The reporting period was marked with taking leadership by KOJOs in conducting tracer studies, apprenticeship monitoring and coaching. Members of steering councils of five KOJOs were actively involved monitoring and studies, and feel confident to continue the exercises. The project will further continue to support the partners in strengthening their capacities in making monitoring and survey activities. As a result part of steering councils members are recognized as qualified monitoring specialists and attracted to do independent monitoring sessions for other entities (e.g. GIZ, ADB, industries).

During the reporting period the project has conducted its own evaluation mission and preparation for the next phase. The results of the evaluation mission are positive but some challenges stay and need to be reflected deeply during the planning session, which will take place in 2013. Those challenges mainly related to HSI position and commitment in VESD and further intervention modes to be identified.

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## 1.2. Overview of achievements in 2012

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*The most important achievements in the reporting period were as follows:*

- ❖ *Out of the planned 315 students to be graduated 306 students (out of them 53 are women) graduated successfully from the Rural Entrepreneur training course;*
- ❖ *345 students entered the second semester in seven vocational schools;*
- ❖ *Out of the planned 210 students 116 students attended in short term modular courses;*
- ❖ *The project have signed a contract with the Peace Corps and receive one volunteer to support KOJOs and vocational school for two years;*
- ❖ *One tracer study visit, one base-line assessment and one monitoring for practical traineeship in all seven vocational schools were conducted under KOJOs lead;*
- ❖ *Out of 258 graduates in 2011, the tracer study results showed that out of the 195 interviewed graduates 74% were employed;*
- ❖ *Six module blocks developed in 2011 meeting the International Labor Organization requirements have passed the international expertise in Kiev city;*
- ❖ *Additional 14 new module blocks satisfying the ILO requirements have been approved by AVET, and currently the 14 modules are being translated into the Kyrgyz language;*
- ❖ *50 teachers and masters have received various trainings and methodological coaching;*
- ❖ *Seven executive directors of KOJOs and four steering council members have participated in ToT on approaches of monitoring, baseline survey and tracer study as well as methods how to coach VS teachers;*
- ❖ *In 2012, funds amounting totally to 32'837 EUR were collected by the local training funds KOJO within the co-financing framework of Rural Entrepreneur course;*
- ❖ *Four KOJOs have signed a contract with ICCO \ AVEP to implement EC financed project on VET. The total amount of grants will be 16'000 EUR;*
- ❖ *The project provided financial support of totally 8'835 EUR to five KOJOs for implementation of Rural Entrepreneur courses;*
- ❖ *The project provided the financial support of totally 1'836 EUR to five KOJO for implementation of students field schools;*
- ❖ *The project financed investment projects for totally 1'435'010 Soms (~25'000 EUR) (for organizing livestock stations, access to Internet, setting up a green house, construction of cattle bathing facility, machinery repair);*
- ❖ *All partner schools have Internet access, which is used by teachers in their work;*
- ❖ *The Agency for Vocation Education and Training ensured financing seven groups of Rural Entrepreneur;*
- ❖ *One education round table was held with the participation of the project representatives together with key donor organizations working in the field of VESD and education (primary \ secondary) reform;*

Our partners:

Financing:



HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation  
[www.helvetas.kg](http://www.helvetas.kg); [www.education.kg](http://www.education.kg);

Implementing:



The Agency for Vocational Education and Training  
under the Ministry of Labour of the Kyrgyz Republic

[www.kesip.in.kg](http://www.kesip.in.kg)

Vocational School No 81,  
Vocational School No 42,

Bokonbaev, Yssykkol;  
Temir, Yssykkol;

Vocational School No 28,  
Vocational School No 43,

Belovodskoe, Chui;  
Janyjer, Chui;

Vocational School No 6,  
Vocational School No 41,

Kokoi, Talas;  
Boo-Terek, Talas;

Training Center "Bilim",

Tup, Yssykkol;



Local Vocational Training Fund "KOJO – Belovodskoe";  
Local Vocational Training Fund "KOJO - Bokonbaev";  
Local Vocational Training Fund "KOJO – Janyjer";  
Talas oblast Farmers' Union "KOJO – Talas";  
"Shoola" NGO "KOJO – Yssykkol";

[www.kojo.kg](http://www.kojo.kg)



"AVEP" Public Fund

[www.avep.info](http://www.avep.info)

Collaborating:



Kompanion Financial Group

Branch offices: Balykchy, Bishkek, Karakol, Naryn, Talas

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### Abbreviations

A-STAR	Agricultural Skills Training in Rural Areas project	MinEdu	Ministry of Education and Science
ADB	Asian Development Bank	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding MLEM
AVEP	Agricultural and Rural Vocational Education Project		Ministry of Labour, Employment & Migration
AVET	Agency for Vocational Education and Training under the Government	NGO	Non Governmental Organization
Coach	Staff introduced by AVEP to support students during project work / Apprenticeship	OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
Coach Farmer	Experienced farmer who takes students for apprenticeship	PCD	Participatory Curriculum Development
EC	European Commission in KR	SC	Steering Committee
EED	Experience Exchange Days	SFS	Students' Field School
ETF	European Training Fund	STAR	Skills Training in Rural Areas Program
FFS	Farmers' Field School	TM	Training materials
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Organization	TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ILO	International Labour Organisation	ToT	Training of Trainers
IPM	Integrated Pest Management	TQM	Teaching Quality Monitoring
KOJO	Local Vocational Training Fund	T-STAR	Tourism Skills Training in Rural Areas project
KR	the Kyrgyz Republic	VES	Vocational Education Scheme
LED	Liechtenstein Development Service	VESD	Vocational Education and Skills Development
		VS	Vocational School
		YPO	Yearly Plan of Operations
		ZOKI	Training, Advisory and Innovation Centre

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## 2. Background and project history

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In Kyrgyzstan, where most of the population lives in the rural areas, an appropriate, progressive agricultural vocational education based on a range of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that incorporates practical and theoretical elements and is oriented towards the market economy is crucial to improve rural income. In 2001, the project started implementing and co-financing a three years' formal education system for farmers by developing competence profiles, a new vocational education scheme (VES) and a new curriculum through the Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) approach<sup>1</sup>. For introducing the innovations, four experimental classes were started in two schools. Textbooks in Kyrgyz language were developed and the occupational and instructional skills and knowledge of teachers upgraded. After a two years' pilot phase, the project activities were expanded in the first phase of the project under the assumption that the Government will finance the following batches of students (budget classes).

By 2003, AVEP covered all seven vocational schools of Naryn oblast and worked through a mandate system in collaboration with the Republican and Oblast Methodological Centres. AVEP elaborated and trained the schools in assessment systems, developed the curriculum for the 6<sup>th</sup> semester and established two credit agencies in order to sustain the students' business plan projects.

In 2004, a co-financing agreement with GTZ allowed the expansion of project activities to another school in the Batken. After final examinations in two schools in Naryn, the first 78 graduates were released and returned to work on their farms. In the same year, so-called Students' Field Schools (SFS) were launched, which gave teachers and students the opportunity to be trained in the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Another two credit agencies were established and a teaching quality monitoring and coaching system introduced. As of autumn 2004, all schools in Naryn were running budget classes.

In 2005, another 180 students graduated from experimental and budget classes. The project continued to provide trainings to teachers, improve the teaching material and introduced a new training programme for school managers. In spring, the first phase of AVEP was reviewed and in autumn the next phase (2006-08) planned.

In 2006, AVEP started its second phase with a continuing but decreasing support for training of teachers, teaching material development (in Kyrg and Rus languages), curriculum fine-tuning and support to SFS for the Farmer/ Woman Farmer course. While the last batch of experimental class Farmer/ Woman Farmer students graduated in Naryn, the first four groups of students started their studies in four new schools in Chui and Yssykkol, according to the newly developed course and curriculum for Rural Entrepreneurs. For this short course of 16-months, creating Local Vocational Training Funds (KOJO) successfully launched an innovative and sustainable training governance and co-financing system. Thanks to a collaboration with the micro-crediting company Kompanion, students in an increasing number of schools received credits.

In 2007, the KOJO Training Fund approach was introduced to another two new partner schools in Chui oblast. As preparation for the handing-over of the Farmer/ Women Farmer course by the end of 2008, the support to the vocational schools in Naryn was gradually reduced. In 2008, AVEP was re-branded into A-STAR (Agricultural Skills Training in Rural Areas). A new co-financing scheme of the Liechtenstein Development Service (Liechtensteinischer Entwicklungsdienst (LED)), allowed the project to expand, and another component was added in tourism skills training called Tourism Skills Training in Rural Areas (T-STAR). Another extension of the project implementation area to two schools in Talas and the piloting of the regional KOJO Training Fund approach mainly marked 2008.

In 2009, the project completely phased out its support to the partner schools in Naryn while significantly increasing student numbers and piloting the collaboration with a non-governmental training provider further strengthened its outreach in the other three oblasts. In particular, the project supported the development of six new module packages based on the ILO methodology and introduced the concept of Stu-

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<sup>1</sup> - Taylor, P., 2001., *10 key stages towards effective Participatory Curriculum Development*



dent Field Schools throughout its partner schools. The local co-financing and ownership through the KOJOs was strengthened by training the Steering Councils and piloting the outsourcing of the KOJO functions to an existing NGO. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency for Vocational Education and Training (AVET) on the increasing co-financing of part of the operational costs of the Rural Entrepreneur course by the State, a milestone was reached which laid the foundation for planning phase III of the project (2010-12).

The year 2010 was marked with start of new phase of the project and intensifying a work with the State on co-financing the 16-months course. The work of the project on further implementation and development modularized approach according to ILO continued and reach some significant results by approval of six modular blocks by the Agency. In 2010 all project partners were coached and backstopped to develop their strategies and financial plans till the end of the phase. The session allowed the project to intensify its work on handing-over and further reducing a support.

In 2011, the project was involved in handing over of key instruments such as tracer study, baseline assessment, monitoring and coaching to local partners. The aim is to build capacity of KOJOs to conduct independently monitoring functions thus become fully locally owned and managed institutions. At the same time the project could concentrate more on policy dialogue and efforts on getting state recognition. It was especially important after the political events happened in 2010, which led to quite big changes in the government and its policies.

Over the last seven years, 3'088 students in 18 vocational schools graduated from the training courses supported by Helvetas. At the time of writing, 345 students are attending the Rural Entrepreneur course which is directly supported by Helvetas in seven schools and more than 671 students are enrolled in the three years Farmer/ Woman Farmer training in another 8 schools. The per capita project spending continuously dropped over the last years and reached an all time low of CHF 2'000. Since 2001, the project trained more than 5200 teachers in over 600 methodical and technical training courses.

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### 3. Summary

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The project objectives were refined during each phase planning. The inception phase was started in 2001 with the objective to create a vocational education in rural areas, which increases the technical expertise of farming communities in Kyrgyzstan and addresses farmers as rural entrepreneurs.

The goal of the first phase of the project was:

To contribute to a locally adapted, effective and sustainable vocational education system for agricultural and rural development that provides graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage private farms and businesses, helping to raise the incomes of people living in the rural area.

While this intention of the project remained the same, in its second phase A-STAR focused more on the financial and operational sustainability aspects of the delivery system and on the adaptation of the training offer to the clients needs.

The overall goal of Phase III reads as follows:

***The project contributes to the development of adequate institutional capacity and expertise at local and VESD system level to finance and deliver agricultural and entrepreneurship training in a sustainable manner to an increasing number of rural inhabitants.***

The overall goal will be pursued through three lines of action, defined as project objectives as follows:

**Objective 1: Training provision**

*The capacity of the training providers to train an increasing number of farmers and rural entrepreneurs through modularised training courses is strengthened.*

The main outputs under Objective 1 are the officially approved curriculum, modules and scheme of the "Rural Entrepreneur course, the revised summer practical training, upgraded competences and skills of teachers as well as modular learning materials and improved school infrastructure.

### **Objective 2: Financing system**

*The KOJO multi-source financing and ownership system together with the State financial contributions ensure a sustained provision of agricultural and rural entrepreneurship trainings up to and beyond 2012.*

The main outputs under Objective 2 are development (respectively exit) plans for each KOJO, improved financing system models, financial sustainability monitoring, regular progress meetings with AVET, improved financial monitoring and audit of the KOJOs as well as trained members of KOJO funds.

### **Objective 3: Policy Dialogue**

*Key VESD stakeholders like AVET and the donors are aware of and discuss the innovations and lessons learnt by the project as well as their relevance for institutional and systems reform.*

The main outputs under Objective 3 are yearly analysis of the financing system, information and involvement of AVET in all project activities, coordination through the Education Round Table, project leaflets and website.

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## **4. Reporting on results**

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### **4.1. Results at impact level**

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At the **stakeholder level** the impact of the project will be that the training providers are empowered to deliver agricultural and entrepreneurial training courses as well as (stand-alone) modules to an increasing number of rural inhabitants for several years to come. On the basis of a multi-source financing scheme involving the state as well as other KOJO partners, training providers supported by the project will have equipped by the end of 2012 a significant number of rural inhabitants with new skills suitable to enhance their farming and rural business activities, which will have a positive and measurable impact in terms of livelihood improvement.

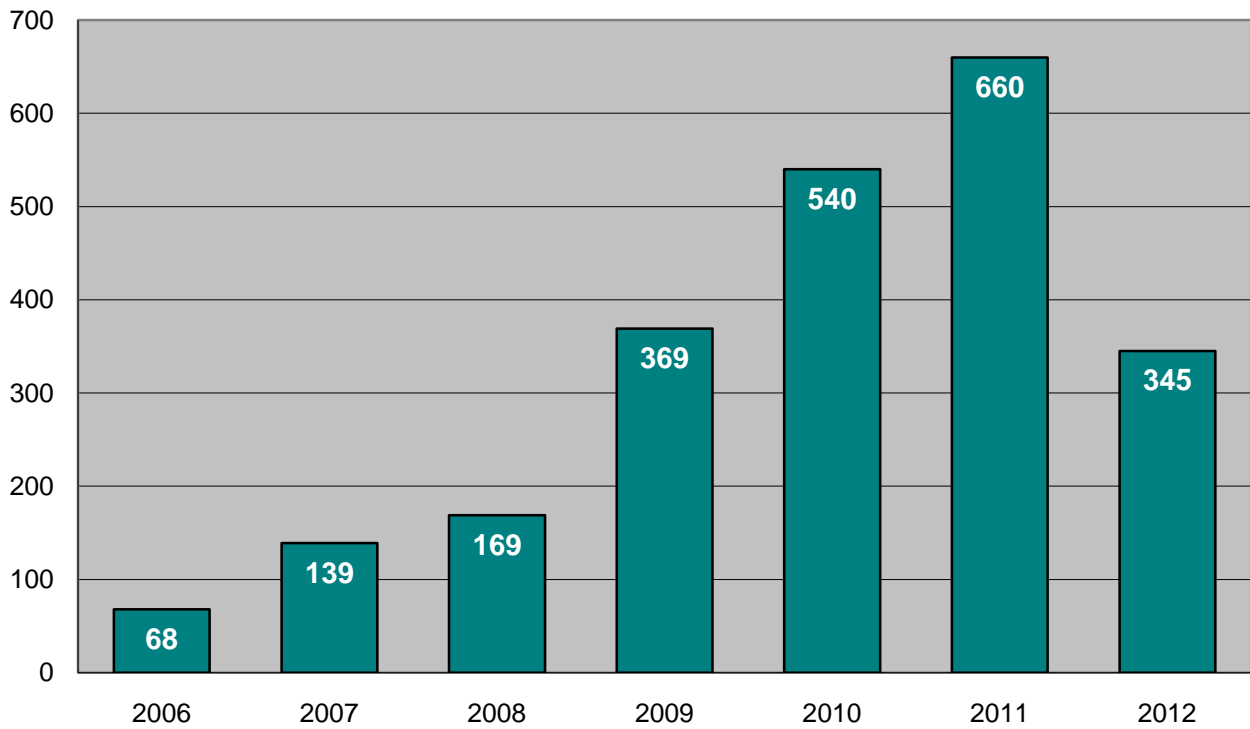
At **policy level** it is envisaged that by the end of 2012, AVET has integrated the “Rural Entrepreneur” training course and its modules into the official VESD system thus creating the basis for the continuation of the training offers by the Kyrgyz stakeholders beyond 2012. Further on, AVET and relevant VESD donors will have received in-depth information on the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt by the project. This can be used to mainstream the training offers to a larger number of rural training providers in Kyrgyzstan and/ or to develop training offers for other occupations. New insights will be available to support the relevant government authorities and international partners in the formulation of legislation, rules and regulations.

During the reporting period, the project achieved the following results, which are relevant for its impact as it contributes to create critical mass of rural entrepreneurs and job-creators who indirectly influence to rural development:

Of the 660 students in Rural Entrepreneur training at the beginning of the year, 306 graduated successfully in February 2012 and 345 entered the third semester.

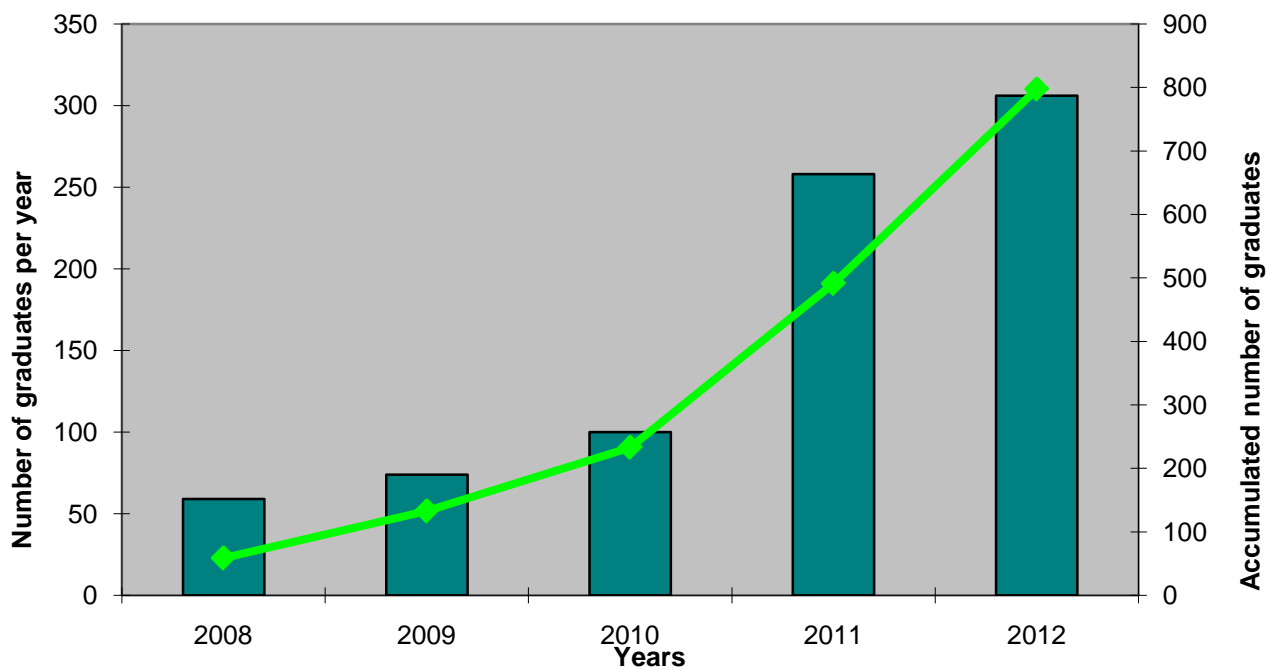


**Diagram 1:** Number of enrolled students as per 30.06.12.

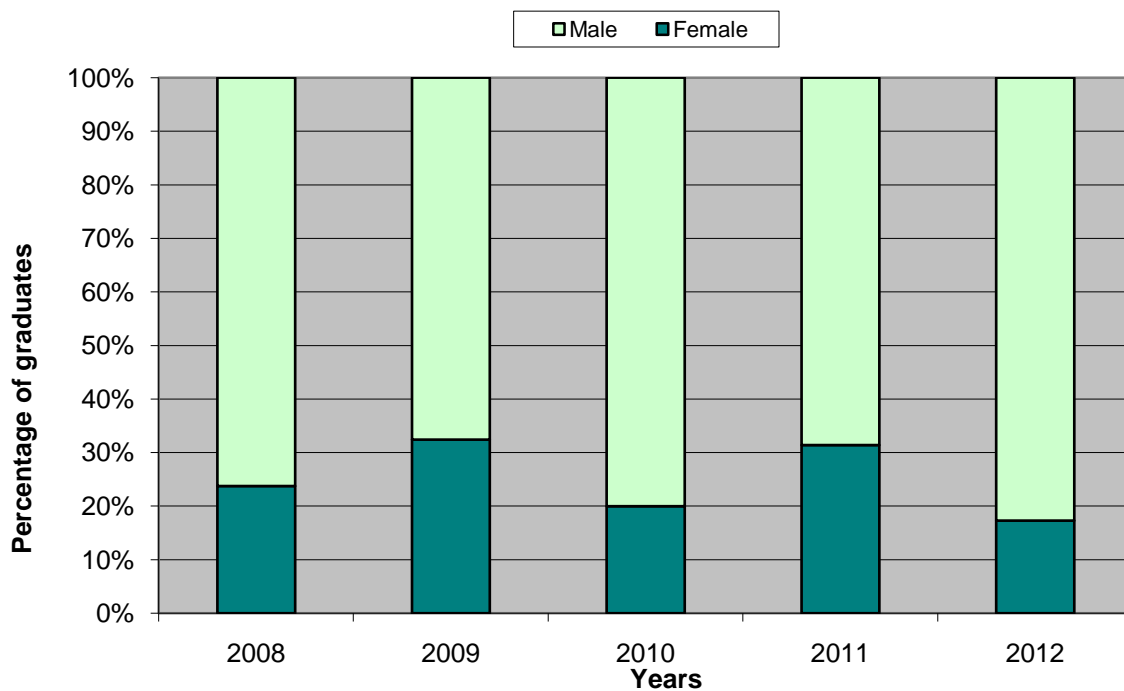


The number of graduates has been gradually increasing and reached 306 in 2012.

**Diagram 2:** Number of graduates as per 01.03.12.

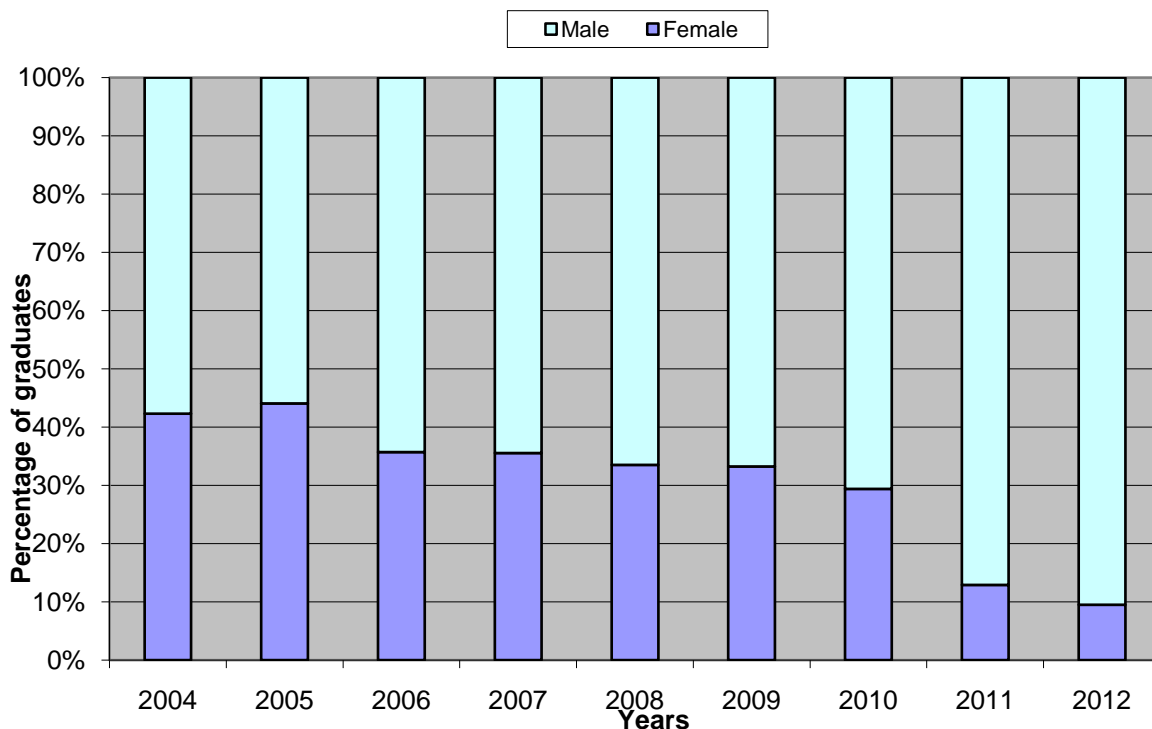


**Diagram 3:** Gender composition of graduates as per 01.03.12.



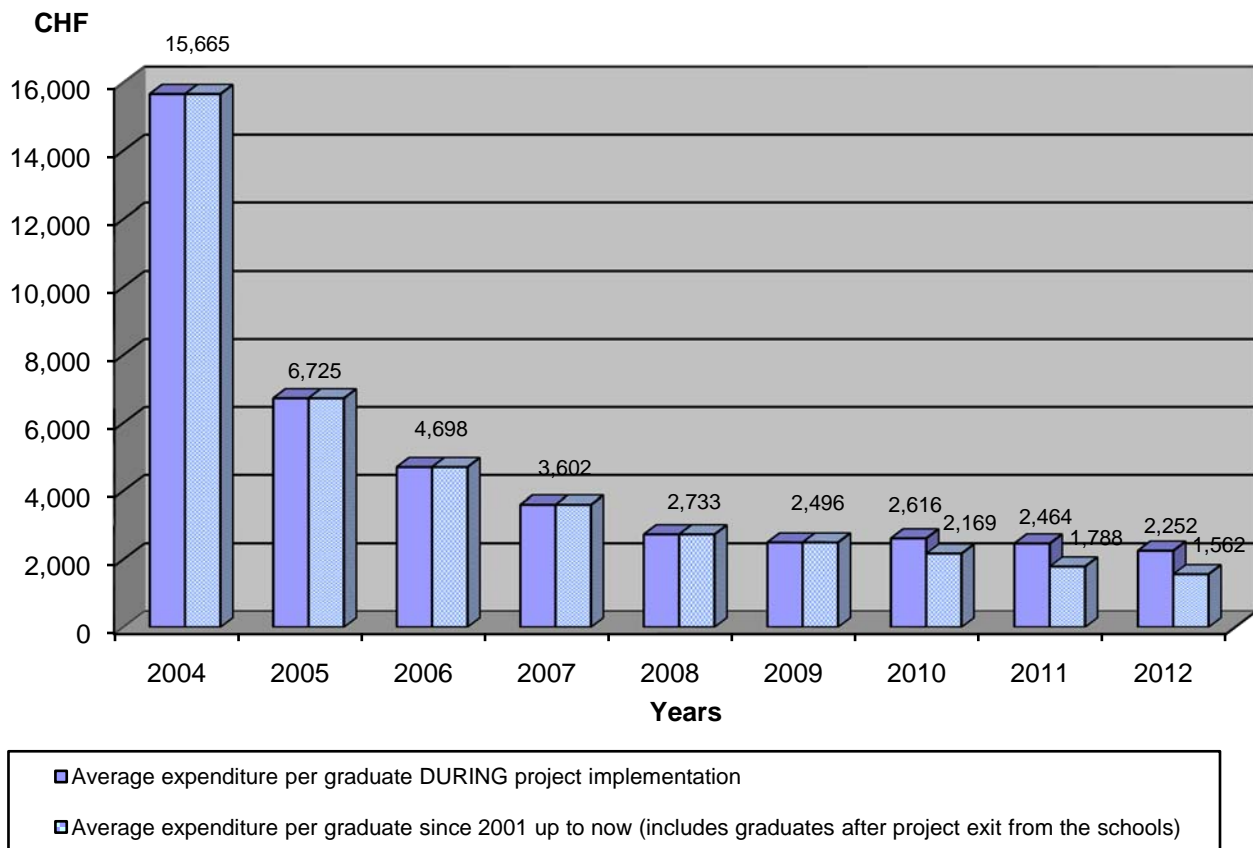
As can be seen from the following diagram, which shows the gender of the graduates of the Farmer/ Woman Farmer trainings supported by Helvetas from 2001 - 09, the definition of a quota, as practiced in Naryn oblast, does not prevent from a decreasing women participation during phasing out (2007-09) and after project end (2010 onwards). The projections for 2011/12, based on current students' data, foresee a further drop of the number of women graduates, as batches will graduate which started their studies in 2008 & 09 when the project significantly reduced its influence on the schools. Although a complete data for 2012 will be available by the end of year.

**Diagram 4:** Gender composition of total graduates as per 30.06.12.



If to put the total Helvetas and LED investments since 2001 and the overall number of Farmer/ Women Farmer and Rural Entrepreneur graduates into relation, the average expenditure per graduate has been continuously dropping and reached now an all time about of 2'000 CHF. The figure is considerable due to decreasing of donors financing and handing over to local partners (incl. AVET).

**Diagram 5:** Average expenditure per graduate, in CHF as per 30.06.12.



## 4.2. Results at objective level

### Overall goal

*The project contributes to the development of adequate institutional capacity and expertise at local and VESD system level to finance and deliver agricultural and entrepreneurship training in a sustainable manner to an increasing number of rural inhabitants.*

The overall goal shall be reached through three objectives, which can be described as follows:

- a) **Support to training provision** through the participatory development of curricula and modules, capacity building and empowerment of teachers and school managers, teaching and learning materials and school infrastructure improvements.
- b) **Development of financing system** through the strengthening and further promotion of ownership and community participation in quality monitoring.
- c) **Policy dialogue** and lobbying for institutional reform with regards to specific project innovations and through synergies with other projects working in the education sector of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In the following the achievements of the project during the reporting period are put in relation with the project phase targets in terms of each Objective and its related Expected Results:

## **Objective 1: Training provision**

*The capacity of the training providers to train an increasing number of farmers and rural entrepreneurs through modularised training courses is strengthened.*

### Expected results

The 16-months course is adapted to the training needs of the farmers and rural entrepreneurs by developing modules, which can also be offered as stand-alone training.

The training providers are able to implement at a sustained quality level more courses.

During the reporting period the project has developed and sent to the following module packages to the ILO certification center to go through official expertise:

- Fruit and vegetable storage facilities;
- Haricot growing;
- Turkey raising;
- Goose raising;
- Horse raising;
- Duck raising;
- Bee keeping;
- Setting up a green house/nursery;
- Chicken raising;
- Agricultural foodstuff storage;
- Stove/furnace construction;
- Plumbing in rural house;
- Welding;
- Carpentering;

The above-mentioned modules are going to be used for KOJOs as additional income generation source, and investment support was successful thanks to modular trainings.

Since 2009 till nowadays, in total 30 module packages were developed. Below is a list of modules developed in accordance with the International Labour Organization (ILO) methodology.

**Table 1:** List of developed module packages:

2009 (number of pages)	2010 (number of pages)	2011 (number of pages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Veterinarian – 788</li> <li>▪ Shepherd – 492</li> <li>▪ Cereal grower – 221</li> <li>▪ Fruit and vegetable grower – 507</li> <li>▪ Wool processor – 111</li> <li>▪ Gardener – 366</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skin processing – 305</li> <li>▪ Dairy processing – 155</li> <li>▪ Meat processing – 338</li> <li>▪ Rural house beautification – 167</li> <li>▪ Fruit &amp; vegetable processing – 437</li> <li>▪ Installation of biogas facilities – 204</li> <li>▪ Use of solar energy – 92</li> <li>▪ Fish keeping – 101</li> <li>▪ Mushroom growing – 286</li> <li>▪ Fruit &amp; vegetable preservation – 160</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goose raising – 137</li> <li>▪ Turkey raising – 366</li> <li>▪ Chicken raising – 129</li> <li>▪ Horse raising – 150</li> <li>▪ Haricot growing – 114</li> <li>▪ Bee keeping – 168</li> <li>▪ Duck raising – 88</li> <li>▪ Stove/furnace construction – 92</li> <li>▪ Setting up nursery/hot house – 96</li> <li>▪ Agricultural food storage – 120</li> <li>▪ Plumbing works in rural house - 20</li> <li>▪ Carpenter's work – 270</li> <li>▪ Welding – 99</li> <li>▪ Fruit and vegetable storage – 270</li> </ul>

The project continues to attract master trainers qualified and certified by ILO to provide coaching to schools in their process of modules development. So far the project is finalizing translation of the module packages into Kyrgyz.

The modular approach proved to be very practical and effective way of content delivery, guaranteeing a chance to acquire necessary competences within a short period of time according to these modules content. One of the main requirements of the ILO approach is to have on place so called working stations, which mean to have fully equipped learning and teaching facilities. Therefore the project links allocation of finances to schools investment projects with list of module packages available in the school. A table below reflects information on investments project done by each vocational school during the first half of 2012:

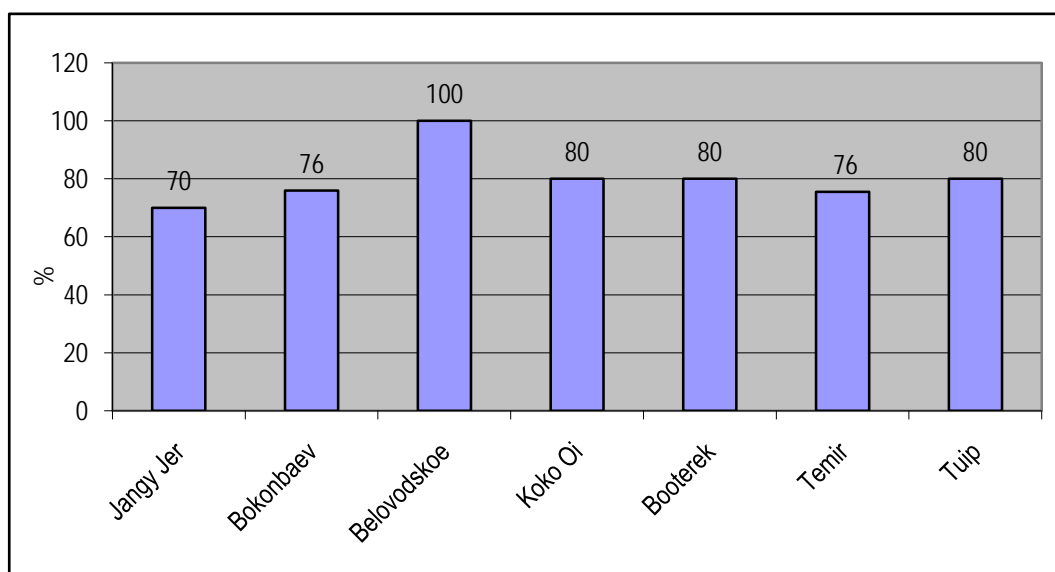
**Table 2:** List of investment projects, in KG soms:

<b>№</b>	<b>Vocational School</b>	<b>Investment project</b>	<b>Amount, KGS</b>	<b>TOTAL, KGS</b>
1	Kok Oi	Class room renovation for economics	150000,00	<b>565910,00</b>
		Machinery repair	247910,00	
		Class room renovation for Aesthetics	168000,00	
2	Tuip	Construction of cattle bathing facility	97000,00	<b>97000,00</b>
3	Jangy Jer	Construction of hot house/nursery	200000,00	<b>200000,00</b>
4	Belovodsk	Livestock station	248000,00	<b>270000,00</b>
		Hot house/nursery	10000,00	
		Internet installation	12000,00	
5	Booterek	Library	88200,00	<b>152100,00</b>
		Internet installation	63900,00	
		Welding model	88200,00	
6	Bokonbaev	Livestock station	112000,00	<b>150000,00</b>
		Class room renovation	38000,00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>1435010,00</b>	<b>1435010,00</b>

Additional to each investment project, the schools had been supported to get Internet access, which allow teaching staff and students to look for additional information and references.

The teaching quality monitoring system stays as important instrument in quality management and basis for backstopping intervention from the project side. The instrument allows to the project also to design better a teachers' training program. Definitely results of monitoring are communicated with the schools and shared with all partners. In January and February, students' attendance at lessons was monitored and the following result was observed:

**Diagram 6:** Students' attendance, January & February 2012

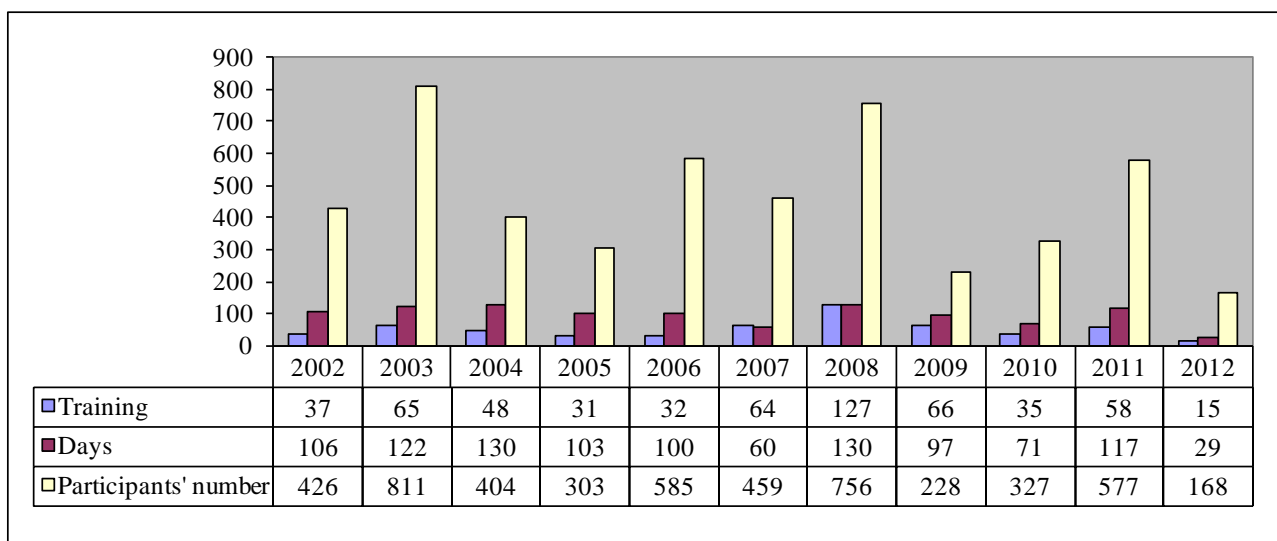


As a result, average attendance rate equalled to 83%, which is considered to be a favourable indicator for the schools and highlights the fact of image improvement of the schools in rural areas. This figures confirm that introduction of modular training contributes to students' attendance.

In the first half of 2012, the project facilitated and provided methodology trainings, where the main focus was given to further development of methodology skills previously acquired by the teachers and masters by a specialist in pedagogy and didactics through attendance and providing coaching support during the lessons in each school. In 2010, the project has developed new monitoring and coaching concept, according to which it was aimed not to hold just training but also to provide teachers with intensive coaching support assisted by the specialist in pedagogy and didactics.

Unlike in previous years, in 2012, KOJO staff as well as their Steering Council members were given an opportunity to independently conduct monitoring and compile monitoring reports, while the project provided required support to those monitoring teams to appropriately manage the above mentioned monitoring process. However, it is yet early to conclude that KOJO employees can independently manage full-blooded monitoring as well as coaching for VS teachers at present. It is to be highlighted that KOJOs still need to get much support from the project to become able to better manage their work.

**Diagram 7:** Number of training for teachers as per 30.06.12.



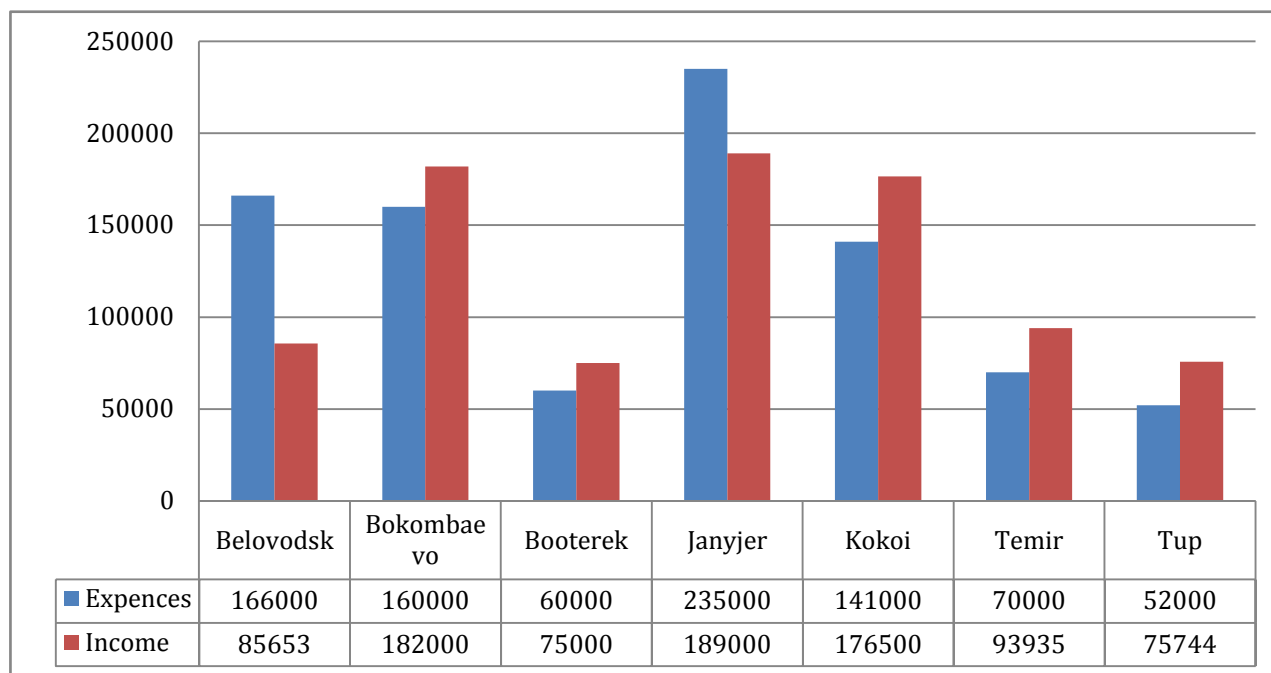
Since training program is currently undergoing and will be terminated in autumn only, here it is reflected a number teachers who attended just methodology training courses. In total 168 teachers from all seven VSs were provided technical and methodological training as well as coaching thanks to the Project support within 29 days.

Through involvement of the Project's monitoring specialist, staff from five KOJOs and their Steering Council members was provided coaching on how independently to manage monitoring process.

**Table 3:** Number of coaching activities:

No.	Activity	Number of trainers / coaches	Days	Number of training participants	Including women
1	Technical training	4	14	28	23
2	Technical coaching	4	8	14	12
3	Methodological coaching	7	7	126	94
	TOTAL:	15	29	168	129

The project had contributed to establishment of locally owned Student' Field Schools, which is integral part of the 16-months course. As well this year the project contributed slightly to revolving fund of the field schools in amount of 106'500 KGS (~1'850 EUR). Same with financing scheme of KOJOs, the project will decrease its contribution gradually. Annual financial results will be known by the end of year and at present the situation looks as follows:

**Diagram 8:** Financial situation of SFS, in KGS**Table 4:** Number of participants and experience exchange days in SFS

No.	VS	Demonstration field (ha)	Number of Students	Experience exchange days	Volume of funds (in KGS)
1	Jangy Jer	0.5	50	5	189,000
2	Bokonbaev	0.7	50	8	182,626
3	Belovodskoe	0.8	50	4	85,653
4	Kok Oi	0.50	65	12	176,500
5	Booterek	0.50	45	5	75,000
6	Temir	1.5	45	11	93,935
7	Tup	0.5	40	6	75,744
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>877,832</b>

In seven vocational schools and in their six branches a special training was organized for 26 SFS masters on a system for additional income generation, and the SFS are operational in using the new system. On the basis the experimental plots of up to 0.5-1.5 ha were set up in each VS.

As compared to the previous years, the experimental activities were not limited to potato growing only but they also included plots for cereal crops, fruit and vegetable and berry growing. Moreover, aiming to earn additional income every vocational school has sown potatoes, haricot, barley and wheat on the land plots from 0.5 up to 1.5 ha, which helped them to get additional income. As one of the main elements of practice, the students have to make various experiments in SFS.

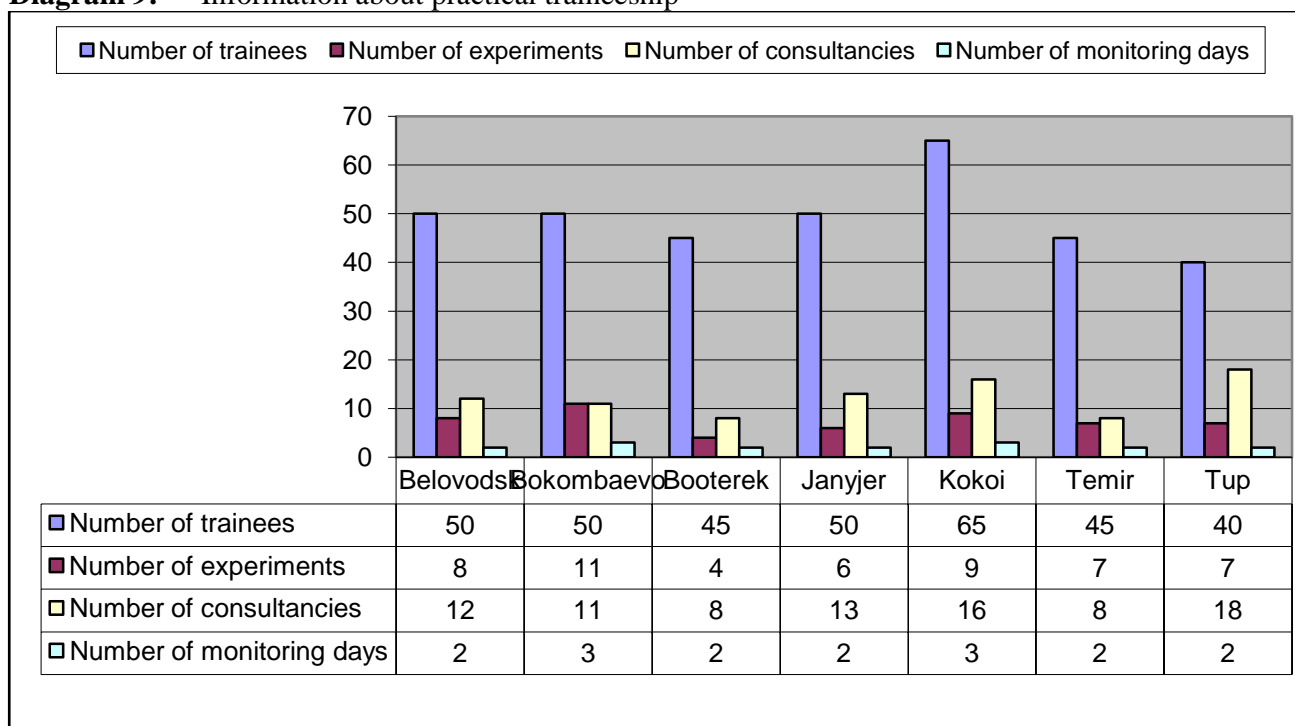
This year the project mainly focused on handing over the monitoring tools to KOJOs. In this regard two-day workshop was organized with participation of all KOJOs directors, methodologists from each vocational school. Participants mainly learned on methodology of conducting the monitoring visits for practical traineeship, how to conduct the base-line assessment of students' knowledge and how to conduct the tracer study of graduates.

Within 16 days five KOJOs together with the methodologists from each vocational school have conducted monitoring visits for the practical traineeship. The project specialist closely supported each monitoring visit and provided coaching on need base. For KOJOs it was difficult to analyze and provide the analytical report on visits. In this regard the project more emphasized its support and this time analy-



sis process was done by the project. In the next monitoring visits in autumn the project will decrease its support will give more responsibility for KOJOs also in analysing the results of monitoring.

**Diagram 9:** Information about practical traineeship



The project staff has conducted two-days training for twelve coaches of all partner schools. The participants were mainly new coaches from branches of the vocational schools. During the training the coaches closely got acquainted with important elements of the practical traineeship like business planning, SFS, practical lessons, experience exchange days and work with advisors. After the training in each school experienced coaches from previous years supported new coaches in starting and organizing the practical traineeships.

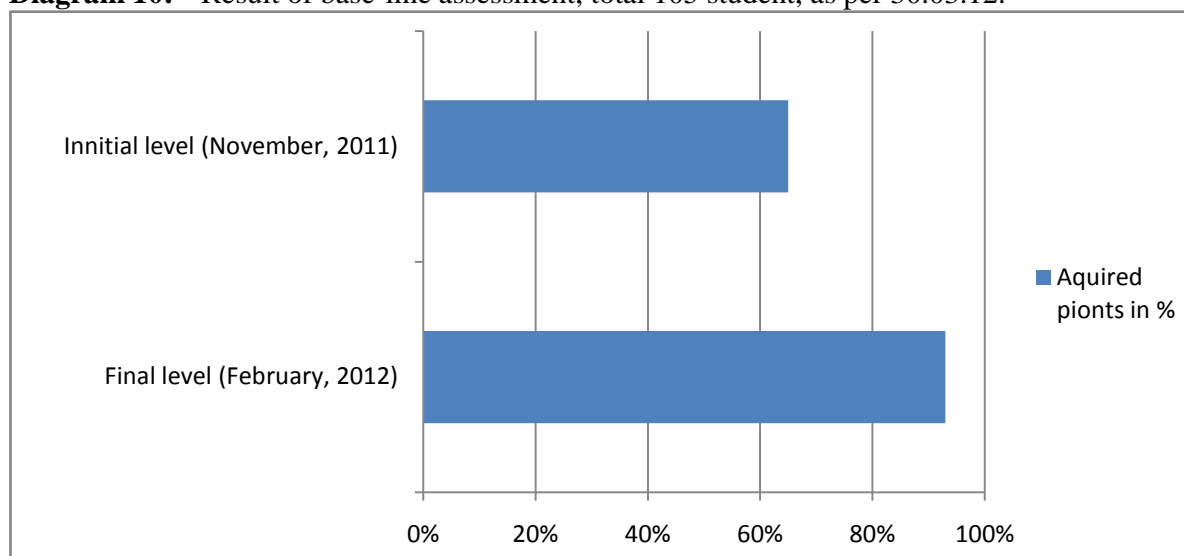
Two vocational schools in Yssykkol: Tup and Bokonbaev have opened their new branches in neighbouring villages and hired new teacher. As the teachers were new, the project has trained them on conducting assessment and organized two study tours to experienced vocational schools of Yssykkol. In total 13 teachers visited other vocational schools during assessment process and experienced teachers have conducted a short training on assessment. Furthermore the participants of the visit conducted their own assessment and as result 45 students were assessed.

Special workshop was organised for KOJO executive directors, steering council members and methodologists in each vocational school on base-line assessment and tracer study research. During the workshop participants were closely introduced to the monitoring tools and methodology. As a practical part of the workshop the project staff supported each KOJO in conducting base-line assessment and tracer study during 24 days.

The base-line assessment was conducted in all seven vocational school by the KOJO executive directors and methodologists from each school. The project methodology specialist has supported each KOJO in conducting the base-line assessments. KOJO executive directors were competent to conduct the activity but it was difficult for some KOJOs to analyse the results. In autumn another assessment will be conducted to assess the initial level of student for new batches and this base-line will be fully conducted by KOJOs and methodologists of the vocational schools.

Fifteen students of the graduating course from each school were randomly selected and assessed and the results of the final base-line assessment were compared with the result of initial baseline in 2011. The results of the base line assessment showed that if during the assessment of initial knowledge level students got 65 % points, in the final base-line assessment the result showed 93 % points. Total 105 students' questionnaire answers were used for the base-line assessment.

**Diagram 10:** Result of base-line assessment, total 105 student, as per 30.03.12.



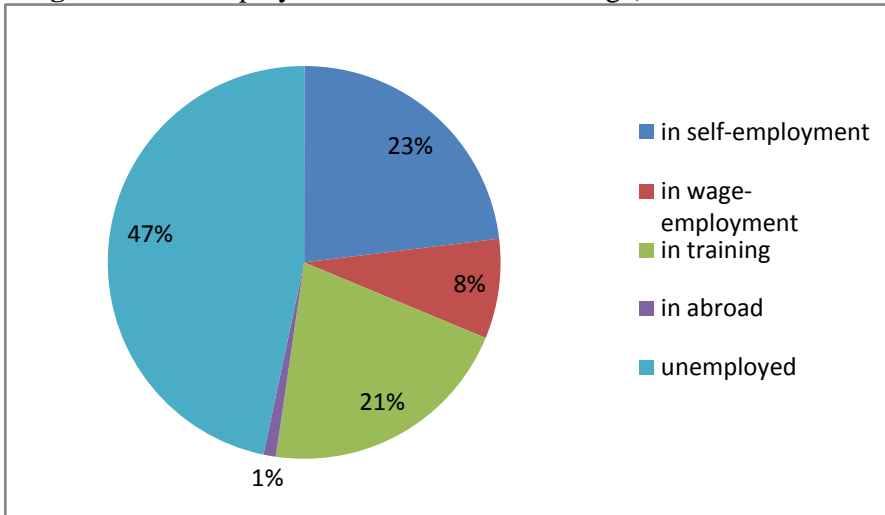
As we see in the above diagram the result of the base line assessment in vocational schools the initial level was 65% and the final level was 93 %. The difference of the students' knowledge improved for 28%. But we should take into consideration that there is a randomly selected result of questionnaires from 105 students out of the total 345 students. Also this results of the base-line is only limited with the assessment of theoretical knowledge of students. To assess practical knowledge of students would be also interesting for the project as more time of the curricula is allocated for practical training. But for practical assessment will be more expensive for vocational schools in terms of purchasing all materials and necessary equipment for practical test.

Tracer study for the graduates of rural entrepreneur course was conducted for the graduates from 2011 in all seven vocational schools in Yssykkol, Talas and Chui oblasts. Out of the total 258 graduates in 2011 from "Rural-entrepreneur" course 195 graduates' were attracted for the survey, which is 76%.

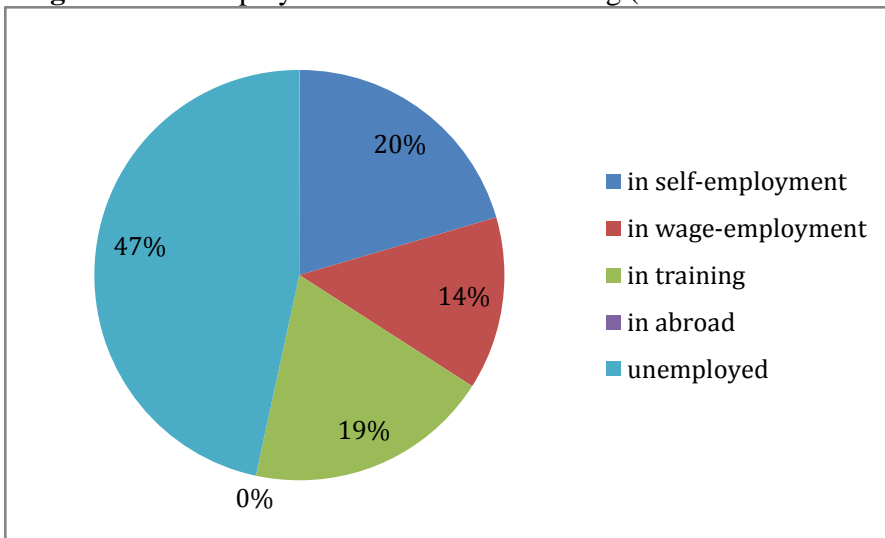
KOJO executive directors and methodologists from each vocational school took the leading role for conducting the tracer study. From each vocational school the interview team consisting of VS and KOJO representatives have visited the graduates at their living places. In some cases where graduates were unreachable interview team called by phone or through the support of relatives.

The main objective was to see the general picture of employment situation of graduates and what they think about the quality of the course they attended. The overall result of the tracer study show that 74% of the graduates are working in their villages on a farm or in other agriculture related business. 42% of graduates were in self-employment, 23% were in wage-employment and 9% were abroad. This 9% of graduates who were abroad also were taken as an employed. Another 13% continue their studies in Bishkek or in other towns. The diagrams below show the employment situation of male and female graduates before and during the interview after one year.

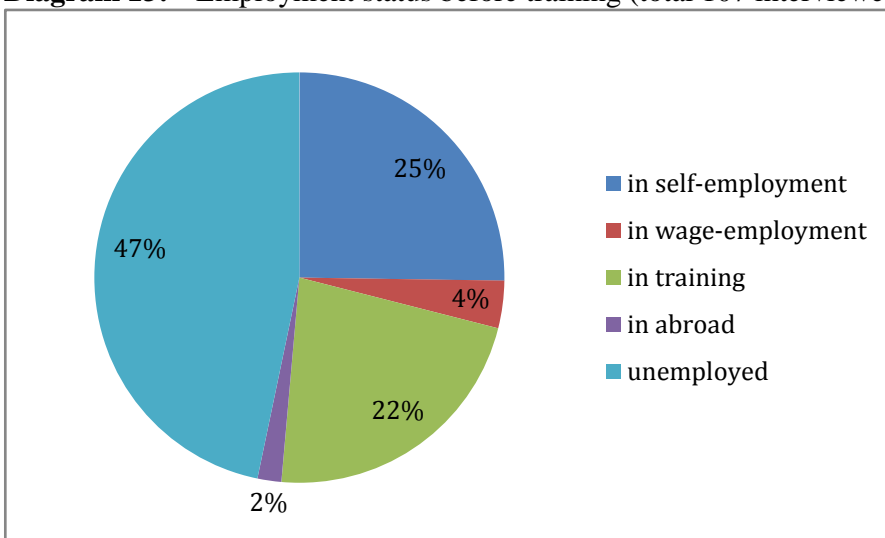
**Diagram 11:** Employment status before training (total 195 interviewed graduates)



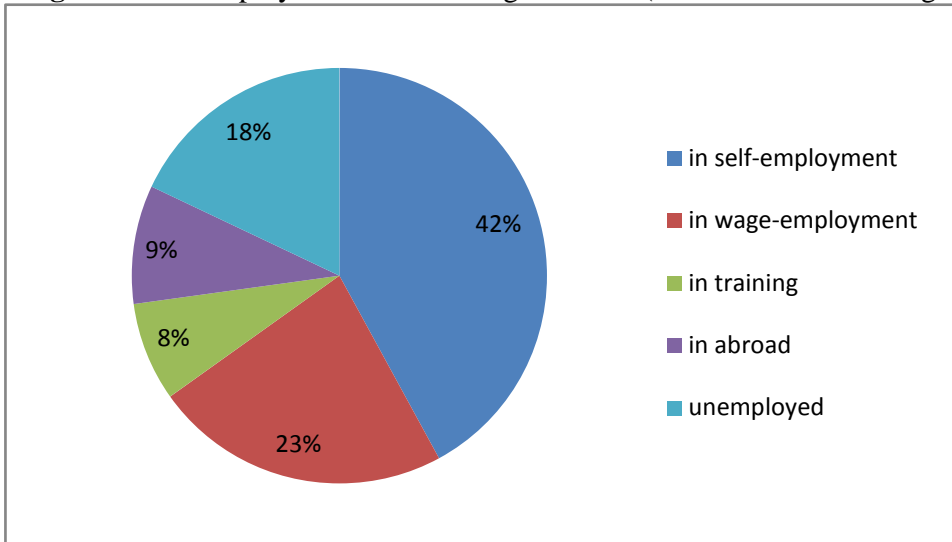
**Diagram 12:** Employment status before training (total 88 interviewed female graduates)



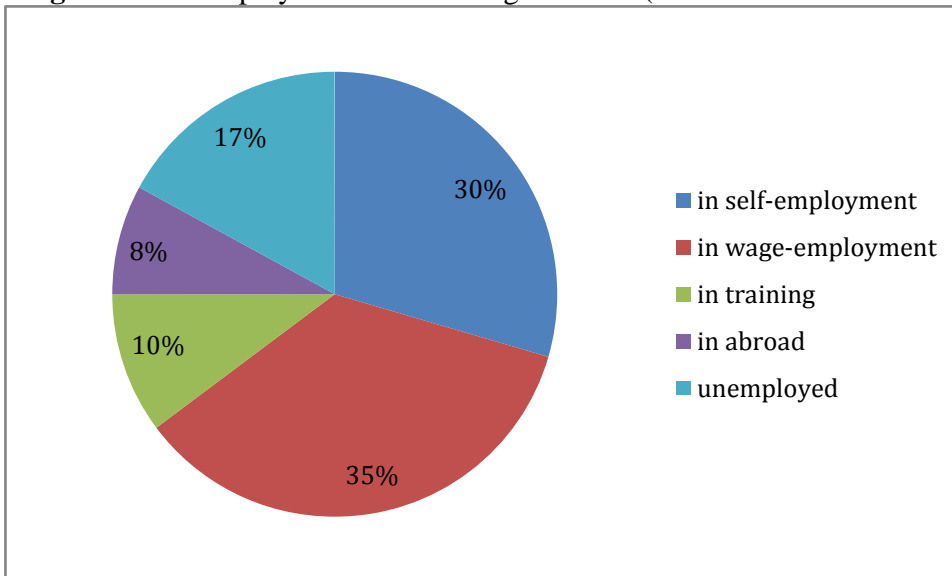
**Diagram 13:** Employment status before training (total 107 interviewed male graduates)



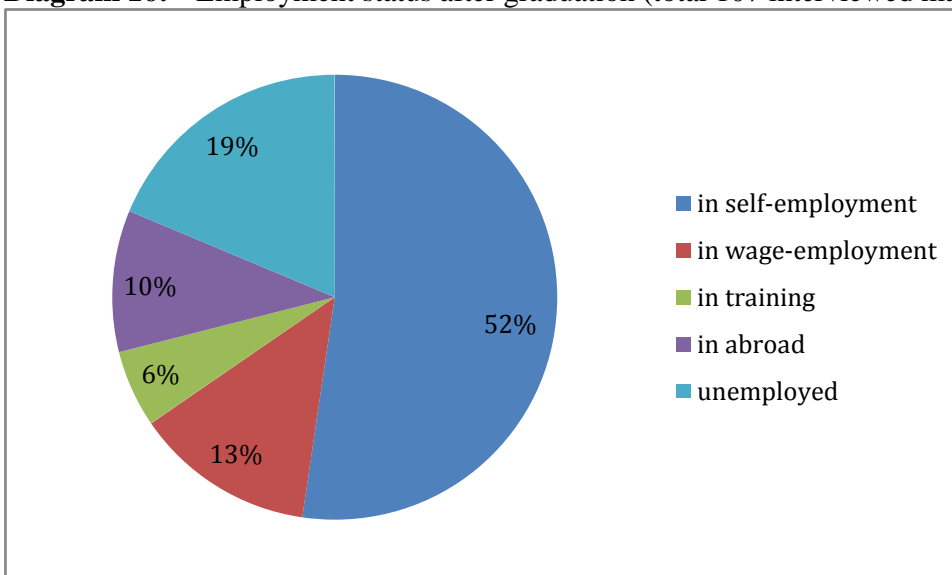
**Diagram 14:** Employment status after graduation (total 195 interviewed graduates)



**Diagram 15:** Employment status after graduation (total 88 interviewed female graduates)

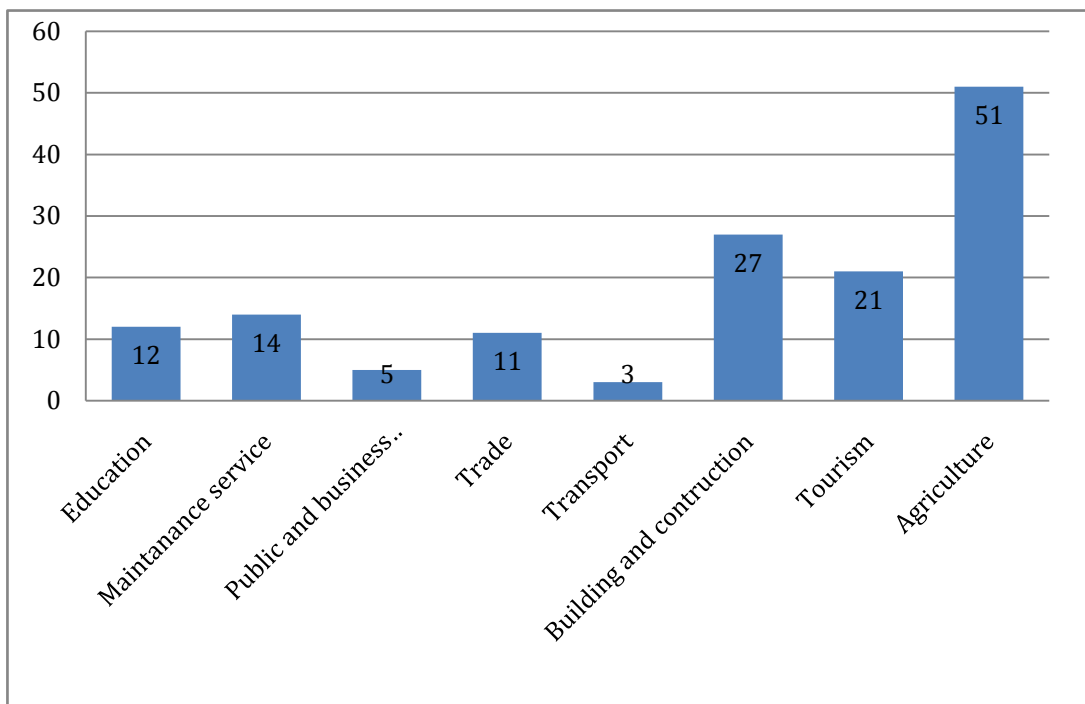


**Diagram 16:** Employment status after graduation (total 107 interviewed male graduates)



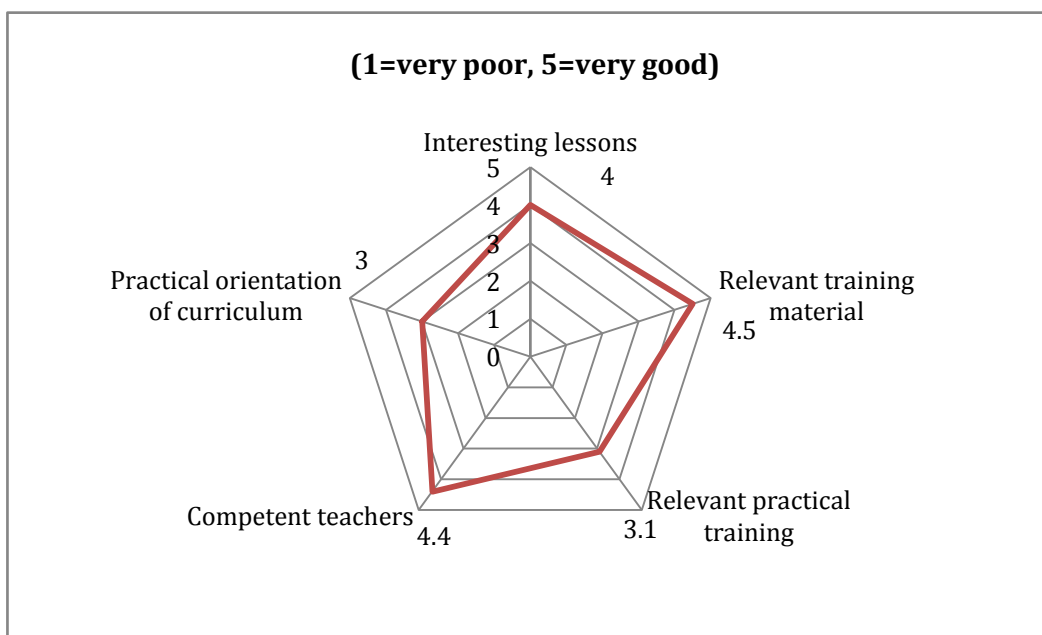
The tracer study also provided a good picture of working fields of graduates who are employed. Out of the employed 144 graduates 51 were working in agriculture and other 27 graduates were in construction and building and 21 graduates were in the sphere of tourism or service.

**Diagram 17:** Number of employed graduates in working fields, total 144 employed graduates



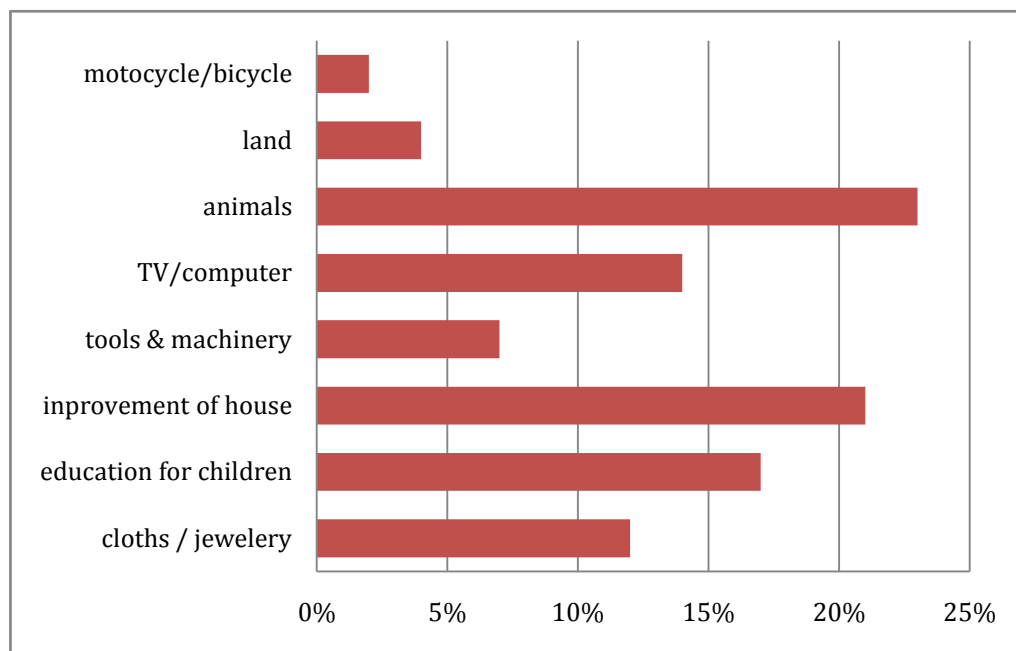
Another important information from the tracer study was to hear from the graduates their opinion on training quality during their study at the vocational school. Interviewed graduates mainly stressed and provided their high marks for the qualification or competence of teachers and for relevant teaching materials. Furthermore, the graduates emphasised that the most decisive factor for lessons to be interesting for the students is the use of a varied and creative methodology by the teachers. But as we see below almost all the graduates evaluate the element of teaching in high level.

**Diagram 18:** Rating of training quality, total 195 interviewed graduates



The figure below shows that where the graduates could acquire different things and most of them could increase the number of their animals, could buy or rent land or repair houses or stables.

**Diagram 19:** Acquirement of goods after graduation by graduates (total 195 interviewed graduates)




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### ***Objective 2: Financing system***

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*The KOJO multi-source financing and ownership system together with the State financial contributions ensure a sustained provision of agricultural and rural entrepreneurship trainings up to and beyond 2012.*

#### Expected results

The minimum conditions in the MoU with AVET are fulfilled.

The financing system models are improved and selected KOJOs continue to contract the training providers that implement courses.

#### Indicators

The money transfer (of salary and other cost) is regularly provided.

16-month course is included in the official list of occupations.

At least 30% of financing of the total cost of the training courses and operational cost of the KOJOs are covered by their fundraising and reserves.

After the leave of one project staff that was responsible for classic KOJOs her responsibilities were distributed to another two project staff. Two project staff has participated in total ten steering council meetings. Steering council members are competent to control and monitor the activities of KOJOs. The decision of each steering council meeting didn't contradict to the key elements of the Project Document.

During the two-day training KOJO steering council members have increased their knowledge in order to strengthen their functions on monitoring tools. Total five SC members have participated and later all of them have joined during monitoring visits for practical traineeship. Another three KOJO SC members were attracted for tracer study research and for baseline assessment processes.

As agreed in the MoU, AVET co-financing currently included the teacher salaries (and other costs which are usually covered by the State) for a group of students in each of the six partner schools into its budget.

**Table 5:** Courses co-financed by the State and KOJOs as per 30.03.12 (graduated in 2012)

Schools	Number of students co-financed by the State	Number of students fully financed by KOJOs
<b>Chui:</b> Belovodskoe and Janyjer	50	33
<b>YK:</b> Bokonbaev and Temir	71	20
<b>Talas:</b> Kokoi and Booterek	50	42
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>95</b>

**Table 6:** Courses co-financed by the State and KOJOs as per 30.06.12. (To be graduated in 2013)

Vocational schools in 3 regions	Number of students co-financed by the AVET	Number of students fully financed by KOJOs
<b>Chui:</b> Belovodskoe and Janyjer	75	25
<b>YK:</b> Bokonbaev and Temir	75	20
<b>Talas:</b> Kokoi and Booterek	50	60
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>105</b>

Only Tup Training Center is financed fully by Shoola KOJO as the center is non-state and it was not possible to include the groups into the state budget. The number of students to be graduated in 2013 and financed fully by KOJO Shoola is 40 participants. Tup Training Centre has applied for Local Employment Centre for co-financing the courses, although the center was not so far successful in attracting the state funds.

The module packages, which were approved by the Agency, are marketed as stand-alone modules and offered to local communities. So far fees from such modules cover only operational costs and KOJOs not yet reached level of profit.

One of sources of income for KOJOs is an interest rate from loans. Talas KOJO and Shoola KOJO have given their funds as a loan to local credit agencies and all operations are controlled by the Steering Councils of KOJOs. Shoola KOJO made agreement with the Credit Agency with the 20% interest rate and as result 350000 soms was transferred from the Agency to KOJO Shoola account. KOJO Talas have accumulated from the interest rates in total 250000 soms. KOJO Bokonbaev also generated 19664 soms from bank deposit. The main income for KOJO Janyjer was the income from the community and the total sum was 115800 soms. The situation with fundraising during the reporting period looks as follows:

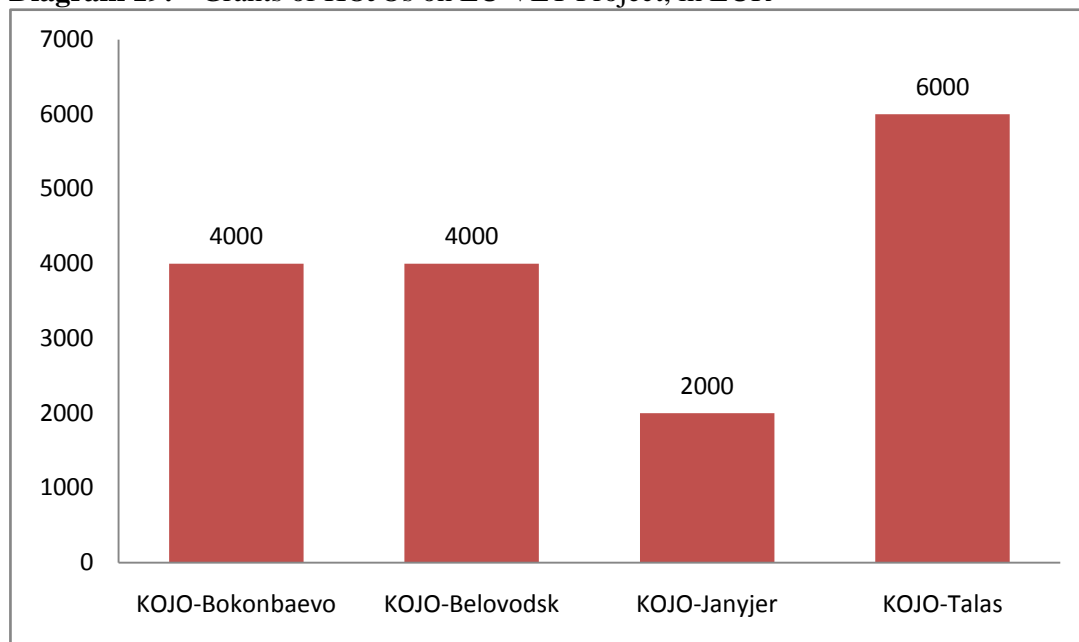
**Table 7:** Fundraised amount of KOJOs (in total 976'560 soms)

N <sup>o</sup>	KOJOs	Public fundraising	Short-term courses	Bank deposits \ Loans	From EU project	TOTAL
1	Shoola	16400,00	10950,00	350000,00		377350,00
2	Bokonbaev	0,00	19664,00	13146,00	232000,00	32810,00
3	Jangy Jer	117600,00	0,00	0,00	116000,00	117600,00
4	Belovodsk	115800,00	83000,00	0,00	232000,00	198800,00
5	Talas			250000	348000,00	250000,00
<b>TOTAL:</b>						<b>1'904'560,00</b>

All five KOJOs have participated in the tender of EU project on VET implemented by ICCO \ AVEP and submitted their project applications. As a result four KOJOs: KOJO Bokonbaev, KOJO Talas, KOJO Janyjer, KOJO Belovodsk have been awarded for a grant for 13 months. The total sum of the grants is 16'000 EUR.

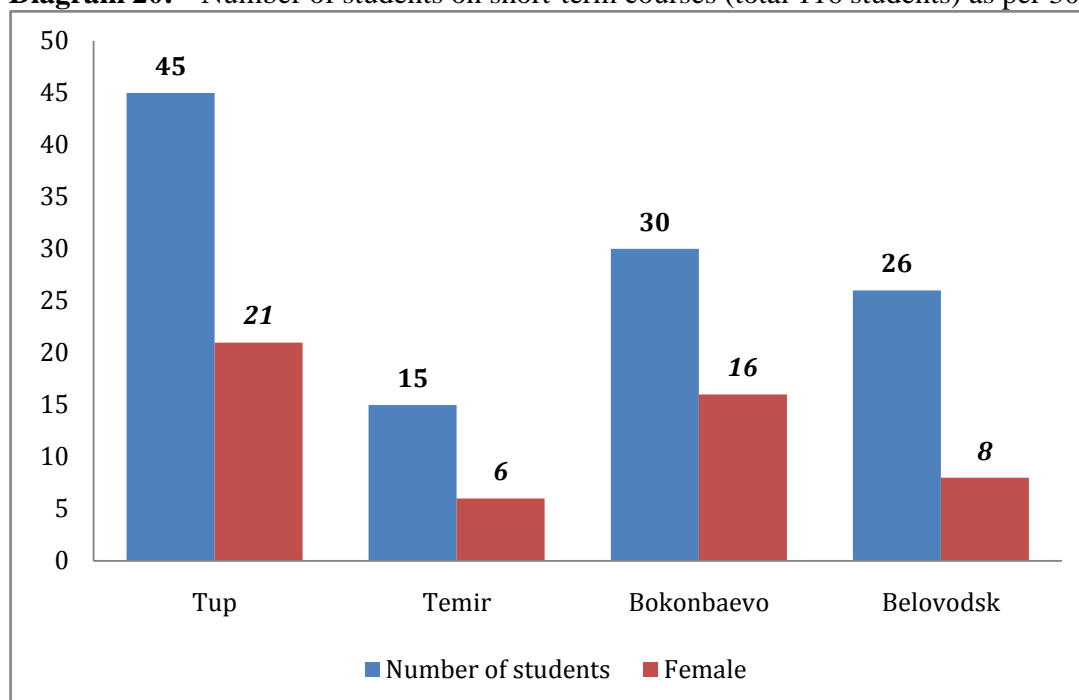


**Diagram 19:** Grants of KOJOs on EU VET Project, in EUR



During the reporting period the vocational schools have offered short-term (1-3 months) courses based on ILO modules. In total four vocational schools (Tup, Temir, Bokonbaev, Belovodsk) could attract 116 students for short-term paid courses. Another two vocational schools: Janyjer and Kokoi are planning to train students for short-term modules in autumn.

**Diagram 20:** Number of students on short-term courses (total 116 students) as per 30.06.12.



The project has submitted an application to attract a volunteer from the Peace Corps, which was approved and a contract between the Peace Corps and the project was signed for two years to attract one volunteer. The volunteer joined the project team in beginning of July and will support KOJOs and Vocational schools in PR, communication, attracting additional funds and in providing upgrading trainings for teachers and students.

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**Objective 3: Policy Dialogue**

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*Key VESD stakeholders like AVET and the donors are aware of and discuss the innovations and lessons learnt by the project as well as their relevance for institutional and systems reform.*

Expected results

Key elements of project innovations are considered by AVET for mainstreaming.

Positions of STAR on selected VESD reform issues are communicated to the stakeholders.

Indicators

At least one of the regular meetings between the project and AVET is used to discuss the comparative study of KOJO financed courses with regular courses financed by the AVET

AVET is familiar with STAR project approaches

Stakeholders recognize the role of STAR in the VESD reform process

The project uses all kind of means and opportunities to mainstream project ideas and achievements. Relations with the ministry as well as with the agency stay good and stable. Several meetings with the agency had contributed to approval of the project products like modules and budgets of KOJOs.

During the reporting period the project has conducted one round table of projects working in VET, where one of the topics in the agenda was a presentation of HSI Tracer Study methodology. The methodology was very much appreciated by participants and set of copies was distributed. In this regard the project continues to maintain online coordination matrix ([www.education.kg](http://www.education.kg)) and communication with other stakeholders. In the second half the project will conduct another meeting.

During the reporting period the project had its evaluation mission assessing general HSI involvement in skills sector (including T-STAR). So far the results are positive in the field of recognition of the project as active player in VESD reforms.

Projects implemented by daughter NGO – AVEP, going well and received positive feedback from EC first monitoring mission. The project should also learn lessons form these EC financed projects for its planning to be taken in 2013.

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## 5. Conclusions and outlook

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- The year 2012 is the last year of the current phase and the evaluation mission taken place in the first half of 2012 developed some critical recommendations and conclusions, which should serve as basis for the planning. The results of the evaluation mission will be used also in country program development process. Although the year is last year in the phase, it was decided to have planning in 2013 and use the year 2013 for consolidating of results.
- Offering short-term courses through module packages proved to be useful tool for schools. In this regard in 2012 the project will finalize its process of certification and assessment of the developed module packages. By end of the year the ILO will approve the last packages of modules so the project reach the goal of number of certified modules and till the end of year the process of recognition and approval by the agency will take place.
- Additional to module development process, the project will support schools in equipping their libraries with supporting literature so teachers will have enough facilities to deliver modules, which is still new approach, on appropriate level. Although it is very challenging for schools to procure enough number of literature after the project, small budget allocations in KOJOs funds allows teachers to fulfill a gap. Internet access available in schools also contributes to capacity building of teachers and better self-preparation. Hopefully schools will use all benefits of Internet.
- The project pays high attention to capacity building of local partners and will continue to provide teachers training program. This year, the project will mainly support inputs of AVEP public fund to the National Qualification Center in the field of teachers' capacity. This approach means that the project will also concentrate more on coaching and backstopping so local partners are able to implement HRD activities.
- As before the Agency for VET will finance in each school at least one group of rural entrepreneurs, which proves the project strategy towards KOJOs sustainability. Nevertheless the project needs to monitor and observe changes in policies and decisions of the agency so timely actions are taken.
- In autumn the schools will launch their education year so it is expected that they will have enough number of participants for 16-months courses as well as for short-term courses. Another critical issue is women participation, which need to be observed and results of monitoring will describe the picture.
- All monitoring and studies done in year 2012 were under lead of local partners, namely KOJO Steering Council members and directors. The role of the project was to coach and backstop them in their effort. The process went smoothly and partners show their commitments in making such activities. The challenge remains same – making sure that all tools and methodologies will be integrated in their system and become their day-to-day instruments. Thus the project will facilitate the process of organizational development and further strengthening these competencies of the partners.
- HSI is recognized as lead organization in VESD reforms and its contributions on local (school) levels are highly appreciated. In meantime there is more and more request from the state partners for involvement of HSI in national actions and policy reforms. Thus it is one of the issues for the project to consider during the planning.