

TO DO! 2010

Contest Socially Responsible Tourism



Award Winner

**COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN THE
ZERAFSHAN VALLEY**

Represented by:

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Penjikent**

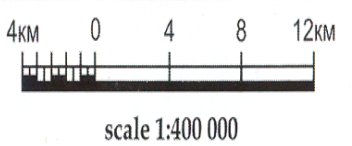
Tajikistan

Rationale for the Award

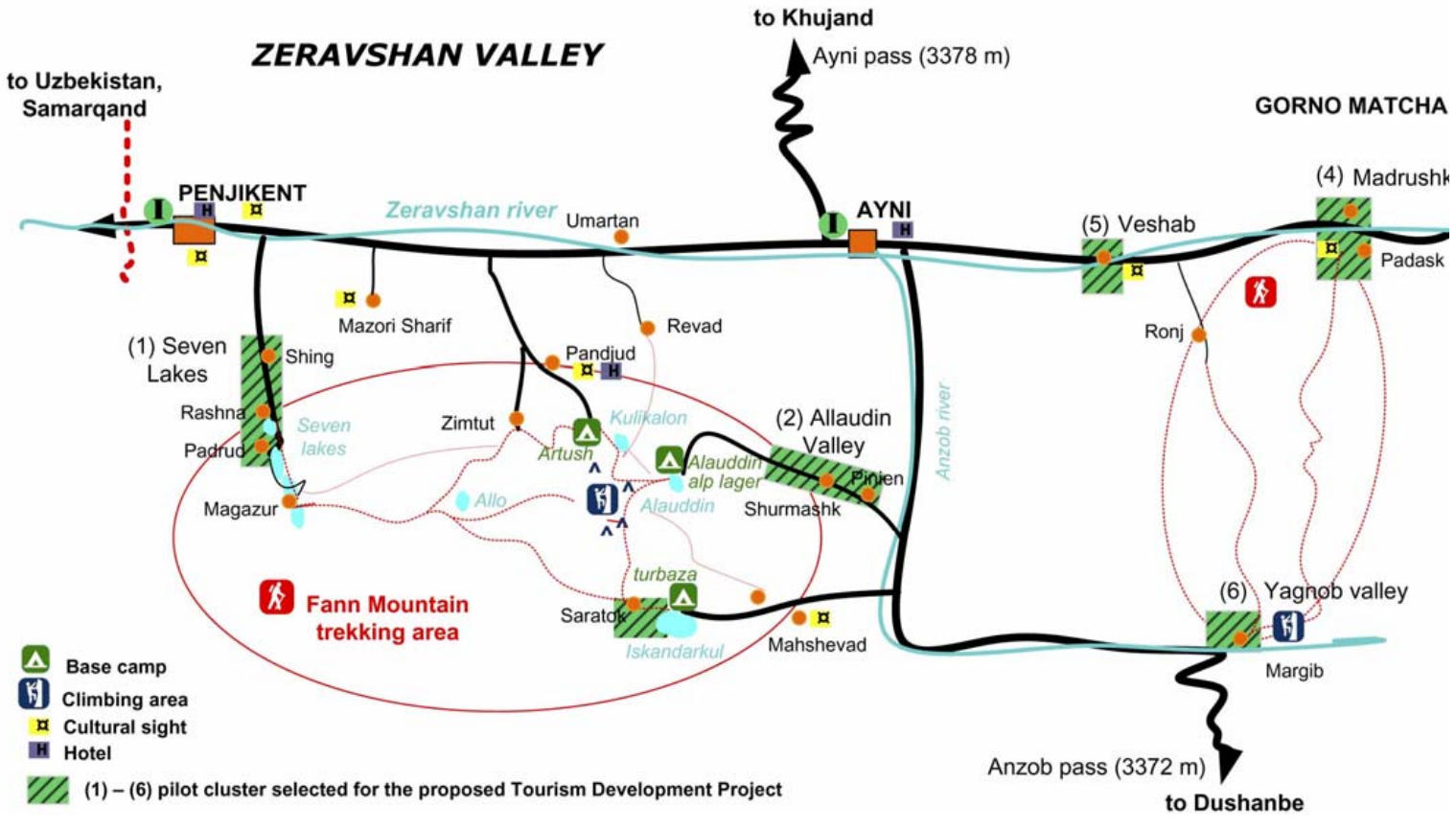
by

Dr. Hermann Warth

ZERAFSHAN VALLEY ON THE MAP OF TAJIKISTAN



ZERAVSHAN VALLEY



- Base camp
- Climbing area
- Cultural sight
- Hotel
- (1) - (6) pilot cluster selected for the proposed Tourism Development Project

1 INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V. (Institute for Tourism and Development), the author visited Tajikistan from 15th to 21st November, 2010. He travelled to the capital Dushanbe and continued his journey to the district capital of Penjikent, the headquarters of the Zerafshan Tourism Development Association (ZTDA), as well as two areas where local people have organised themselves in Tourism Initiative Groups (TIGs) under the ZTDA: in the Valley of the Seven Lakes and around Lake Iskander.

The author stayed at two home stays and visited several others. Because of the short duration of his visit, he was not able to participate in a several days' trekking or horse riding tour with camp life.

The objective of his visit was to assess the project DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN THE ZERAFSHAN VALLEY. Before the author's return, the most important results of his research were discussed with Jamshed Yusupov, executive director of ZTDA, Fidavs Turakulov, communication officer of ZTDA, Valeriya Tyumeneva, development consultant of the German Development Service (DED) and project advisor, Sebastian Falck, DED development consultant of the Committee of Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism in Dushanbe, and Dr. Uta Horn, resident representative of DED for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In recognition of the objectives, the concept and its implementation, the author recommends awarding the project DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN THE ZERAFSHAN VALLEY by the Zerafshan Tourism Development Association a TO DO! prize.

2 BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The Zerafshan valley is situated in western Tajikistan, in the administrative region of Sughd. It is being criss-crossed by the Zerafshan river. Zerafshan means "carrying gold". Gold is mined by a Chinese company. The valley is bordered in the north by the Turkestan mountain range and in the south by the Hissar and Fann mountains with peaks above 5,000 meters. There are many lakes in these mountains. Most of them were brought into being by landslides and avalanches due to earthquakes. More than 300,000 people live in the partly very narrow valleys. Their culture and their way of living in this wonderful natural setting offer a tourism potential which had also been made use of by tourists during the Soviet era – especially by tourists from Socialist countries. Archaeological excavations and museums add to the region's tourist attractions.

However, the cold winters reduce the season to the months of April to October. Many roads not only demand patience, but also a considerable degree of travellers' sitzfleisch. The roads and paths end at the remotest mountain villages. From there on, hikers enjoy the freedom of walking on foot along the various trekking routes, some of which are easy, others quite challenging.

Before becoming a sovereign state in 1991, Tajikistan was a "Socialist Soviet Republic". It provided a large number of jobs, though partly in unproductive factories (mining, textiles, meat processing, tins, and tobacco). Without this supplementary income, most of the farmers' families – the share of the rural population is 75 percent – would have had to live below subsistence level, as their plots were too small to support them. Many former factories are now ugly "monsters", serving as reminders of those times. Others have been privatised and modernised, but employ only a small number of people. Labour migration is one way out. Almost every family in the Zerafshan valley has one member working in Russia or Kazakhstan. The annual remittances in Penjikent district are reported to be 13 times more than the district government's budget. In the country as a whole, labour migrants' remittances contribute about 30 percent to the gross domestic product.

In view of the limited economic potential of Tajikistan, the developing tourism sector can contribute to increasing many people's income. With 90 percent mountain area, Tajikistan had been the poorest country of the Soviet Union, and it is still the poorest among the former Soviet Republics¹. The tourism income can help to reduce or avoid the long time of separation from their families that migrant workers are facing. This view is also shared by the government. The "National Tourism Development Program in the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period of 2010-2014" mentions "tourism as priority direction of national economy" and contains a number of general measures to attract more tourists. There is also an action plan, but without a corresponding budget so far. As compared to many other countries, the tourism sector in Tajikistan is still in its infancy. It lacks adequate infrastructure (a major part of it was destroyed during the civil war 1992-97), professional marketing and skilled workers.²

The Zerafshan Tourism Development Association (ZTDA) is trying to address these shortcomings in its field of activity and is also concerned with another area: building and maintaining people's identity. The region which is now Tajikistan had for millennia been a battleground and a setting for cultures and intellectual and spiritual influences which overlapped, complemented or fought each other: Scythians, Sogdians, Persians (Zoroastrianism), Greeks (Alexander the Great), Chinese (Buddhism), Arabs (Islam), Samanidians, Carahanidians, Mongols, Timuridians, and Uzbeks all left their traces, and in more recent times above all the USSR: "It marginalised the Tajik language, Islam, and the religious-cultural institutions, festivals and rituals as well as individuals – a multicultural identity with a Russian focus was supposed to emerge." (Bill, 36 – see Bibliography and Documents)

Tajikistan became independent in 1991. Her people now live in a presidential republic within borders partly drawn in strange ways. Since then, the culture of the various ethnic groups (about 80 percent Tajik, 17 percent Uzbek, 1.3 percent Kyrgyz, and one percent Russian, out of 7.3 million inhabitants³) was, on the one hand, able to overcome "domestic marginalisation". On the other hand, it now has to cope with the risks and opportunities of globalisation. The government's contribution to the search for identity appears artificial: In many public places, the government shows off huge statues of Ismail Somoni (892-907), who is regarded as the founder of a Tajik nation, and of the poets Abuabdulla Rudaki and Abul Kasim Ferdousi who lived at the same time. Many streets and squares have been named after them. The national currency and airline are named Somon(i).

By working in the fields of infrastructure, marketing, training and identity building, ZTDA works in line with the national efforts to develop tourism.

¹ Schleicher/Tyumeneva, Prüfbericht, p. 5, wrote: "Tajikistan is the poorhouse of the former Soviet Union. Due to the collapse of the community of states and the following civil war in Tajikistan (1992-97), the country lost about 60 percent of its economic capacities and experienced an almost complete exodus of skilled workers, most of them of Russian origin. In the late 1990s, this situation led to a massive impoverishment of the population... Through a political consolidation combined with increasing support from the international donor community, it was possible to improve the economic situation, but some regions, such as the Zerafshan valley, have benefited only very little from this progress."

² Efforts are being made to use the tourism potential of Central Asia under the "Silk Road" brand. The World Tourism Organization has compiled an action plan. However, animosities between some of the countries – also between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – have so far prevented its implementation.

³ The figures are based on the census of 2000.

3 THE PROJECT

3.1 History and Funding

The civil war ended in 1997. Since 1999, Welthungerhilfe (WHH, formerly known as German Agro Action – GAA) has been working in Tajikistan in projects on agricultural rehabilitation. Since 2004, WHH has been strengthening its work in the Zerafshan valley. In the three districts of Penjikent, Ayni and Gorno Matcha, WHH has been supporting food security projects, small businesses, disaster prevention, resource protection, and since 2007/2008 tourism – with the objective of setting up self-help structures and raising incomes in the villages. In cooperation with the local NGO “Agency for Support of Development Processes” (ASDP), WHH launched the Community Based Tourism Programme in 2007, under the organisational structure of ZTDA. It was officially registered with the government on 15th April, 2008.

During the first phase from 2007 to 2009, the project got financial support from various organisations, including the European Commission, facilitated by the WHH coordinating office in Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan which passed the money on to ASDP, the implementing organisation (motivational work, development of project ideas, training of Tourism Initiative Groups and ZTDA). Smaller grants have been provided by other international organisations.⁴

In 2007, the German Development Service (DED) assigned a consultant to ZTDA, and will be sending her successor in 2011. Since mid 2010, for a period of two years, DED has been funding a position for community development and handicrafts promotion. After these two years, ZTDA will – step by step – start paying the full salary.

During the second project phase, the European Commission funded the project. Within a fixed financial framework, the project organisers had to apply for the specific funding of measures and had to report to the WHH office in Penjikent regarding the disposition of funds.

The first project phase ended in December 2009, the second one in December 2010, and along with it the respective financial support. ZTDA's own contribution⁵ in 2009 was about 12 percent, and in 2010 about nine percent (but on the basis of a much larger financial volume than in 2009).

3.2 Structure and Objectives

The ZTDA general assembly currently consists of 31 members. They are from the seven Tourist Initiative Groups (TIGs) in the areas Seven Lakes, Alloudin, Yagnob, Lake Alexander, Kuli Kalon, Veshab, and Madrushkat. In three districts of the Zerafshan valley, the TIGs provide services: home stays, guided trekking tours and trips to cultural sites, horse riding, transport services (vehicles, donkeys), folkloristic performances, demonstration of the making of local products. Every TIG has an elected representative with the main task of organising training programmes on site which ZTDA management has been asked to provide.

The general assembly elects a supervisory board consisting of three members from within the group, a board of auditors of four members (among them one person representing a bank that provides micro-loans) and a four members' advisory board, currently including the former pro-

⁴ These are: European Centre for Eco and Agro Tourism (ECEAT), Mountain Societies Development Support Project (MSDSP, a local organisation of the Aga Khan Foundation) and the Business Advisory Service Programme (BAS) of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The SOROS Foundation supported the project's handicraft component.

⁵ ZTDA is generating income from: membership fees (30 Somoni/year; 1 € = 6 Somoni); rental of camping equipment; ten percent of most of the forms of income generated by the TIG service providers who are getting tourists through ZTDA and through tour operators; ten percent of the income generated by the TIG handicraft producers through the sales organised by the ZTDA management in shops and at exhibitions; commission paid by external service providers who are providing services that ZTDA cannot offer (vehicles, drivers, Airlines, Hotels) and who are getting guests through ZTDA; sale of publications.

ject manager, a representative of a local NGO, a representative of the Ecological Department of the local Ayni District Government, and the DED development worker.

The supervisory board appoints the director of ZTDA and approves the posts. The management is currently staffed with full time jobs as follows (one person each): director; marketing/communication/logistics/tour guiding; community development and handicrafts promotion; driver; accounting (with 25 percent capacity utilization). The management is responsible for the proper implementation of the project and especially for the training and capacity building of TIG members. For this purpose, they also employs external experts for short periods of time.

While the objectives of the project are in people's minds and are being followed in practice, they had not been clearly defined in the documents submitted. They could be formulated as follows: "Raising the incomes and strengthening the identity of rural subsistence farming communities through a form of tourism that is socially, culturally and ecologically adapted to the local situation."

4 ASSESSMENT

The comparison of the activities conducted by the project COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN THE ZERAFSHAN VALLEY with the **six TO DO! contest criteria and three additional questions** leads to the following assessment:

Evaluation against the TODO! contest criteria
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4.1 Taking into account the different interests and needs of the local people through participation

The project is being run by seven Tourist Initiative Groups (TIGs) with currently 21 home stay providers and about 100 other service providers. In order to organise themselves, the TIGs have, through their general assembly, given themselves an organisational structure with management and supervisory bodies. The service providers are independent entrepreneurs. Their only restrictions are stipulated in a contract signed voluntarily with ZTDA, in which they make commitments to the organisation, but can also avail its services. This model of self-management offers the chance of a high degree of participation.

The planned project procedure should follow the "IPIMED" steps: investigation of the possibilities and limitations of a project, **planning** of the objectives and activities, practical implementation of what has been planned, **monitoring** and **evaluation**), and **documentation** of results.

- Investigation of possibilities and limitations of tourism development. This happens in large village assemblies. With those people who are seriously interested in tourism, the opportunities and risks will then be discussed and weighed individually. The participatory approach taken by the management of ZTDA already at the very beginning of the project is very important and must be appreciated.
- Planning: The first plans will be made on site together with those interested (regarding trekking routes, cultural/archaeological attractions, construction and furnishing of home stays, production and presentation of local handicraft, etc.) Further steps in the planning process will then be taken on a monthly basis, bi-annually and annually on site as well as at the general assembly of ZTDA.

- **Implementation:** The members of the TIGs are responsible for the provision of tourism services. If necessary, they will ask the ZTDA management for their cooperation, not vice versa. Especially in the case of construction projects by home stay providers, ZTDA staff will be on site to accompany the project (with advice and financial support, if needed).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The home stay providers must fill in performance sheets about their products and services which will be analysed jointly with the management and which will be discussed in the general assembly. Each home stay provider will then be assigned a quality rank between 1 and 3. Depending on the rank, tourists will be charged between eight and ten US-dollars for bed and breakfast. Other service providers' quality deficits and the scope for improvement will also be discussed with them in regular intervals. Tourists are being asked to give written feedback on the quality of their stay. These documents are evaluated regularly by the service providers together with the ZTDA management.
- **Documentation:** Contracts between the service providers and ZTDA exist in written form. They can be accessed by anyone, along with the jointly developed "performance sheets". This also guards against possible suspicions regarding positive or negative discrimination. At the annual general assembly, the management submits reports on the number of tourists, the finances, sources of income, marketing activities, along with the comments collected from tourists about their stay.

4.2 Enhancing the awareness of the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their everyday economic, social and cultural lives

- The people are aware of the risks and opportunities that tourism offers in their region. Elder people also experienced tourism during Soviet times and seem to have earned a bit from tourism. Most of the visitors, however, spent their holidays in recreation centres run by trade unions. Tourism was generally controlled from above. The income was centrally administered and did not directly benefit the local population, but went to the government's treasury.
With its participatory management and its many training programmes, the Community Based Tourism Programme (CBTP) promotes a decentralised form of tourism. About 90 percent of the income remains with the service providers. The ensuing opportunities are readily taken, as the fast growth of the TIGs and their membership in the project area show. On the long run, some of the people hope to be able to support their families with the income from tourism, thus reducing or avoiding the need for labour migration of family members to Russia.
- The main risk lies in declining numbers of visitors if the quality of the tourism products is poor or deteriorating. The home stays are therefore in open competition on the classification of their products and services, which is discussed annually at the general assembly. The home stays are classified and certified annually by the general assembly. Comprehensive codes of conduct have been developed for trekking guides and drivers.
- The sale of handicraft through ZTDA at a shop in Penjikent, at shops in Dushanbe, and at exhibitions contributes – even though only marginally – to a reduction in the seasonal fluctuations of the tourism income. The ZTDA management offers training programmes that now acquaint the participants, who are familiar with subsistence farming and a centrally planned economy, with the requirements and conventions of the global market economy. The number of participants is growing steadily.

4.3 Participation of broad local population strata in the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism

- 21 home stay providers and more than 100 smaller service providers share the income from tourism. This is a considerable number, which is even higher if the family members of the service providers are also included.
- Local products are purchased to supply the home stays and trekking/tour groups, so that the producers will also earn an income.
- ZTDA has only one vehicle (a Lada Niva) which is needed by the staff. For the tourists' transport – if they don't organise it themselves – ZTDA would contact the owners of vehicles or local service providers, so that they will also earn an income.
- Income is also generated by selling handicraft and, though still to a lesser extent, by selling medicinal plants.
- Musicians and children earn an income from cultural performances.
- If the tourism income becomes steadier, there might be a reduction in labour migration and the long time of separation from the families.

4.4 Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improving working conditions relative to payment, social security, working hours as well as education and training

- Jobs that can generate an additional income are per se attractive for the mountain farmers do not even live at subsistence level. The community based tourism programme is therefore welcome, successful and growing. As the service providers are not staff of ZTDA, they can determine themselves to what extent they want to engage in tourism, how much they want to invest in infrastructure and how much of their work time they want to spend on it. The contracts with ZTDA only require service providers to report tourist arrivals (even if these were not through ZTDA), the services delivered and the income generated, and to pay fee of 10 percent of the income (in case of home stays for bed and breakfast only, not for lunch and dinner). The contracts are fair, as the service providers in turn get tourists through the management, as well as advice and many training courses. During the first phase of the project, they also got significant grants to improve the buildings for the home stays (covering about 80 percent of the costs for sanitation, 100 percent of the costs for ovens, solar cookers and fire-fighting equipment).
- The ZTDA management provides – as also stipulated in the contracts – education and training programmes on the TIGs' demand, according to their needs, e.g. in guiding trekking tours, horse riding, cooking, home stay management, handicrafts, marketing, improvement of English language skills, book keeping, development of new trekking routes.
- In addition to the training programmes, TIGs visit each other in order to learn from one another, and ZTDA members visit Kyrgyzstan in order to learn from community based tourism programmes there.
- The contracts of the ZTDA management staff are based on regulations which have been elaborated very detailed and have been approved by the general assembly. However, the employees only get short term chain employment contracts. This obviously has to do with the unsafe financial basis on which ZTDA works. Chain contracts mean insecurity for the

employees regarding their future income, which can have considerable influence on their motivation and concentration at work.

- The ZTDA management staff also gets support for their education and training. Apart from various short term training programmes of 1-2 days on subjects such as tourism promotion (like human resource management, training of trainers, advocacy & lobby, quality management, sustainability criteria) they can also gain experience abroad – if the budget permits.

In 2009, the director visited a tourism exhibition in Tashkent; in 2010, the communication officer visited the World Travel Market in London. What needs to be emphasised in particular is the three years' assignment of a DED development consultant who will be having a successor from 2011, with a contract for at least two years.

4.5 Strengthening the local culture and the cultural identity of people living in tourism destination areas

- The ZTDA tour guides are being acquainted with the history of the Zerafshan valley and the surrounding mountain regions.
- The home stay providers are being trained in the preparation of traditional local food. It almost always contains meat, which does not suit the taste of each and every guest. The author got very good vegetarian food, which may also be thanks to the success of trainings in the preparation of non-traditional food.
- The home stay providers are successfully encouraged to use local materials for constructions and furniture and to prefer the traditional style of furnishing their home stays. This is also one of the criteria for the classification of home stays. Tin roofs are to be tolerated, as they do not require much wood for their support.
- Women – at the moment there are more than 30 of them in two groups – are getting intensive support in the production and marketing of handicraft products. Attention is paid to the use of local materials and colours, and to the use of local designs as a basis. The products are being sold in Dushanbe and at a well located shop in Penjikent, which is run by ZTDA.
- The collection, processing and marketing of medicinal plants which are abundant in the region is supported by the project. This business seems to be well expandable.
- Folkloristic performances are to defend the local culture against the onslaught of the "culture" of globalisation.

4.6 Avoiding and minimising any social and cultural damage caused by tourism in tourism destination areas

- The competition between the individual home stays of the TIGs is suited to maintain or improve the quality of services. However, it also entails the danger of social disharmony. While there may be differences regarding the services, there may also be circumstances that the home stay providers have not caused themselves and that put them at a disadvantage, such as lack of capital, less staff, less education, a less favourable location; which all can mean that these home stays will be getting fewer guests than others. In such cases, the ZTDA management tries to create a balance by visiting these home stay providers

more often, giving more advice, offering more education and training programmes and sending them journalists to improve their marketing. Financial compensation is not offered.

- Furthermore, a tariff has been developed together with all the service providers, stipulating the same prices for the same services, so as to avoid disharmony.
- Every visitor is given the info sheet "Code of Conduct". It contains valuable information on the right kind of clothing (adapted to the local situation) and good behaviour. The impact of this sheet is being reinforced by a small brochure in which home stay providers present themselves and their social and cultural environment when welcoming guests. This good tool could be improved further.

Evaluation against the TODO! additional questions

A) Could you give some examples which document that your project/measure is in line with environmental compatibility?

- In the "Criteria Catalogue for Homestay Classification", credit will be given if the building has been constructed in local style, using local materials (points system). Other requirements concerning environmental sustainability are not assessed, though they are listed in the annex.
- The author noticed on site that energy saving bulbs are very common, as well as solar cookers which, people said, were being used in summer time.
- After an exhausting trekking tour, tourists may find a sauna extremely attractive – even in very simple style. However, in view of the high energy consumption (firewood and coal, with firewood being scarce) and the negative influence on climate (CO₂!), home stays should refrain from offering it. ZTDA needs to raise awareness among service providers and tourists, so that at least other home stay providers will not install saunas.
- Trekkers enjoy campfires in the wilderness. They are depicted in advertising materials by ZTDA. Campfires should be avoided, due to lack of firewood. Most of the tourists understand that.
- The waste generated during trekking tours is said to be taken to Penjiket for disposal.
- The "Code of Conduct" for tourists points out correct, environmentally friendly behaviour.

B) Are there any examples in the framework of the project which make clear that a just participation of women and men has been taken into account during the planning/ implementation phase of your project/measure? Considering gender relation, can be found any improvement of the status/situation of women within your project/measure?

- Among the 31 members of the general assembly, the decision making body of ZTDA, 13 are women. Even for associations in non-Islamic societies, this is a considerable number.

- At the ZTDA management level, there are four men and one woman, plus the DED development worker as a (female) consultant. She is Tajik. Her successor will also be a female development worker from DED.
- The 21 home stays are run by families. According to all experience to date, it can be ruled out that especially in a home stay business women would not be involved in the planning. Their involvement does not need to be formal and public; it happens in the house, within the family. When running a home stay, there is a lot of work in the kitchen, in the other rooms, in service and on the compound outside the house.
- The author was able to participate for a short while in the handicraft training of one of the women's groups. The 12 women took note of his presence in a friendly manner and remained perfectly natural. They meet in one of their houses, taking turns, which means that with the exception of the host, they are spending a few hours outside their own families, which does not seem to be a problem. The handicraft training programmes offered by ZTDA are gaining acceptance and are carefully being expanded. One aspect in favour of the sensitive approach taken by ZTDA is the fact that in the villages around the highest of the Seven Lakes no home stay has been offered so far, as "the women there are so shy".

C) Through which measures/mechanisms is the economic and institutional sustainability of the project guaranteed?

- ZTDA has been registered at the national government since April 2008 and seems to be enjoying a good reputation. This does not come as a surprise, as it works in line with the government's objectives in many respects: improvement of tourism infrastructure, marketing, training of skilled workers, income generation. One proof for the project's acceptance by the district administration is the fact that the administration not only allows but even encourages ZTDA to put up not just the signboards for the home stays at the roadside where you enter the village, but even the village signboards themselves, which is a task actually to be performed by the authorities.
- The German Development Service (DED) is intensively accompanying the slow but steady growth of tourism in the Zerafshan valley. After the three years' assignment of a consultant, her job will be continued by a successor for at least another two years. At the national level, there is another DED consultant working with the Committee of Youth Affairs, Sports and Tourism, which can have only beneficial effects when it comes to integrating the project into the national framework. During the authors stay in the project area, another expert was working there as a trainer in handicraft. She has been assigned to the project as an intern on a scholarship of DED's Young Professionals Programme.
- The external funding for ZTDA in 2009 was about 88 percent. The survival of the project will depend on increasing the income, as the financial support by the European Commission (EC) ended in December 2010. Fortunately, the number of visitors has increased considerably: 2008: 88; 2009: 98; 2010: more than 300. In order to continue the project on a safe basis without EC funding, the managers of ZTDA are currently engaged in intensive networking. They are in contact with six possible donors and they are confident that they will be able to raise financial support. Furthermore, ZTDA has a large network of regional and international tourism organisations and tour operators. Such contacts can help occasionally to get a tip at some stage regarding possible financial support for the project.

5 CONCLUSION

The COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM PROGRAMME IN THE ZERAFSHAN VALLEY is integrated into the national tourism strategy. It follows clear objectives which are to be achieved through well-planned activities. They are embedded in the social, cultural and natural environment, so that they demand neither too much nor too little from the actors involved. Therefore, one can feel a kind of relaxed atmosphere in the project, but no lethargy whatsoever. Project ownership, an effective organisational structure, a good flow of communication and participatory management methods also play a part.

In his novel "Kogda padajut gogi" (German: "Der Schneeleopard" / "snow leopard", p. 127), Chinghiz Aitmatov describes the dangers associated with the sudden transformation in neighbouring Kyrgystan in 1991 and has his protagonist say that the market was not made for him. It would spit you out. Why didn't anybody want to think about freeing themselves from the Socialist monopoly, just to slide into the market monopoly? Those who cannot cope with the monopoly would be eliminated. In Tajikistan, the concept and the methods of the Community Based Tourism Programme play a role in ensuring that the Tourist Initiative Groups (TIGs) won't experience this. They help to ensure that the people who have always lived at a subsistence level, who grew up in the planned economy of the Soviet Union and have now arrived in the market economy will manage the transformation without any harm.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The author was told that individuals may become members of ZTDA without being members of any of the seven TIGs. A "fresh breeze" and new ideas are always good for an organisation. However, possible changes in the majority at the general assembly should not dilute the concept of Community Based Tourism.
- The project area is large and visits to the TIGs take a lot of time. If the budget allows, the management should strengthen education/training and communication/general consulting/coordination of TIGs by employing more staff. This would also require employing a second driver.
- More opportunities for income generation could be created by selling camping equipment such as mats (and covers), sleeping bags, down jackets, and tents.
- In order to prepare themselves for the Western market and to communicate better with tourists, everybody involved should attend more English classes.
- The management should find out whether in the project area the "Jamoat (an administrative unit of five or more villages) socio-economic development programme" of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) could be used. It provides micro-loans and revolving funds.

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