



**WINROCK**  
INTERNATIONAL

Helping Women Improve Farm Management

# Helping Women Improve Farm Management

The Konogaly Farm, in the Issyk-Kul Region of the Kyrgyz Republic, is a bit of a rarity in Kyrgyzstan. It produces the same commodity mix as many farms in the region—apricots, pears and apples—but the difference is in its management. That the farm is headed by a woman, Gulmira Sharsheeva, is unusual for the country, but more typical for the region of Issyk-Kul, which views itself as one of the country's most progressive regions. Sharsheeva is a leader among the women in her village, and they look to her for guidance and advice.



Struggling to balance family duties of caring for aging parents and raising children on limited resources, the women of Issyk-Kul all needed help with how to more efficiently manage farm and family budgets, as well as how to generate additional income. To facilitate learning from each other, the women decided to form the Hillary NGO. That's when Sharsheeva turned to Winrock International's

USAID-funded Farmer-to-Farmer Program to request a U.S. volunteer to help the women develop ideas for increasing income, manage farm and family budgets, share perspectives on balancing family duties and business, and further develop the Hillary NGO.

In April 2002, Winrock volunteer Edie Shannon traveled to Kyrgyzstan to conduct a series of training seminars to help the women look at options for income-generating activities. Offering eight seminars in different villages of the Issyk-Kul Region, Shannon worked with 59 women on developing business plans, marketing produce, and managing farm and family budgets. She encouraged the women to take the initiative and think of activities they could do easily with existing resources that would earn them additional money.

**Enterprise & Agriculture:**  
Volunteer Technical Assistance

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Kyrgyzstan

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By December 2002, Gulbara Ahmatova had developed a business plan for a gardening and greenhouse activity and was seeking additional funds from UNDP for operating expenses. In addition, seven small women's groups were formed to share experiences and ideas on how to improve their standards of living and quality of life. At Shannon's suggestion, NGO members began selling their produce in the larger, more lucrative markets of Almaty and Bishkek. These activities successfully resulted in additional revenue for 28 women of the Hillary NGO.

Winrock will continue to provide additional technical assistance to the women of Issyk-Kul to help them further their success.

Through the Farmer-to-Farmer Program, Winrock is replicating the success of Issyk-Kul farmers and the Konogaly Farm elsewhere in Central Asia.



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Arkansas Office:  
2101 Riverfront Drive  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202-1748, USA  
Telephone: 501.280.3000  
Fax: 501.280.3090

Washington DC Office:  
1621 N. Kent Street, Suite 1200  
Arlington, VA 22209-2134  
Telephone: 703.525.9430  
Fax: 703.525.1744

E-Mail: [information@winrock.org](mailto:information@winrock.org)