



SUCCESS STORY

Iron Horses Stay in Halmion

USAID supports innovative businesses unable to access traditional startup capital.



The masters stay busy in the auto repair shop in Halmion.

Photo: Mercy Corps

“I was very happy to stay in Kyrgyzstan and find a good job close to my home.”

- master Hamid Yusupov, one of the three mechanics employed at Uson Matysakov’s repair shop in Halmion.

These days it is not unusual to see a long line of cars waiting to be repaired in the front of mechanic Uson Matysakov’s repair shop in Halmion, southern Kyrgyzstan. In June 2008, Uson transformed this once empty building into a bustling auto repair facility. He now has a thriving business thanks to his entrepreneurial spirit, several highly skilled masters, six eager apprentices and new equipment and tools he acquired through a Cluster Endowment Fund micro-loan. The Endowment Fund was created and is administered through the Mercy Corps Collaborative Development Initiative funded by USAID.

Uson started seeking other entrepreneurial opportunities after becoming dissatisfied with the results of his previous canteen business. Observing the rapidly growing number of automobiles in Halmion, he realized there was a lack of auto repair facilities in the area. Car owners had to expend the extra time and expense of traveling 30 - 60 kilometers to the nearest repair shops. The USAID-funded project supported Uson’s idea of opening a quality repair shop because it addressed a local community need, created new workplaces and apprenticeship opportunities, and was economically viable.

Being aware the skill level of the mechanics is of critical importance to the reputation of a repair facility, Uson recruited a highly skilled master, Hamid Yusupov. Like many migrant Kyrgyz workers, Hamid previously had to find employment in Russia. Now he works at the shop with three other mechanics trying to keep up with demand while also passing on their knowledge and skills to the six apprentices employed by the shop.

The business now serves up to 10 clients a day – double the initial projections. “I’m very pleased with the high quality of their work,” says local customer Zamir Masherapov about Uson’s shop. “And we are glad the repair shop is now available locally, so that we don’t need to drive 30 - 60 kilometers away from our village.”

Uson continues to expand and improve his business. Recently he opened a spare parts shop within his garage to provide a much needed local supply of auto repair and maintenance items.