



Kyrgyzstan's Red Petroleum Company and Corporate Social Responsibility

Studies of the post-Soviet Russian economy recognize the significance of the country's vast natural resources and note that, in particular, the most important of Russia's natural resources is petroleum. Environmental research, however, has documented the devastating impact of Russia's oil and natural gas sectors. Leaking oil pipelines as well as tanker spills have left a legacy of contamination. Severe health problems, including cancer, have resulted from polluted drinking water in many regions of the former USSR. Soviet history demonstrates that there has been an important linkage between resource extraction and environmental degradation (http://www.lehman.edu/faculty/rwhittaker/Day02-Research/Russia_%20Environmental%20Issues.pdf)

Since the collapse of the USSR, petroleum companies in the former Soviet Union have been increasingly inclined to recognize both the importance of the natural environment and the society in which this industry operates. One petroleum company which operates in Russia and has offered leadership in recognizing its corporate social responsibility is British Petroleum. Although they are not alone in this pursuit, BP has done much to set the tone for other components of Russia's petroleum industry. In recent years, British Petroleum has supported a variety of social, cultural, educational and charity projects throughout Russia. Their educational initiatives have included efforts to advance science programs in nine universities by providing scholarships as well as financial support for professors responsible for energy studies. (www.bp.com/en_ru/russia/csr.htm)

The Red Petroleum network of filling stations is following the model set by British Petroleum. Red Petroleum is Kyrgyzstan's most important company involved in retail sales of fuel from the main Russian refineries in the oil products sector. The Red Petroleum network operates in Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad regions of Kyrgyzstan.

Several activities illustrate the social conscience of Red Petroleum. When the public association "Ene Meyerimi" announced its intention to construct a children's playground, the management of Red Petroleum took a leading role in this project. Red Petroleum, of course, is a small company in comparison with corporate giants like BP, but its commitment to this modest project demonstrated a genuine concern for dealing with problems in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, their emphasis for the playground was that it be oriented toward the special needs of children

with disabilities. In their statement about this undertaking, the Red Petroleum management spoke of their desire to have a positive impact on positive effect on the physical and mental health of young children. For them, the playground was more than simply slides and swings but rather a means for bringing special needs children together with healthier children and to bridge what might otherwise be a gap between the two groups. This sensitive and sophisticated approach to social action is a reflection of the extent to which the Red Petroleum company understands its place within the Kyrgyz community.

An additional indication of the corporate social responsibility of Red Petroleum was reflected by their work in association with the Bishkek public association "Disabled People's Society" in 2015. On the occasion of the International Day of Disabled Persons, the Red Petroleum network contributed a variety of food products to this organization. On 13 November 2015, representatives of the company contributed a quantity of flour, butter, sugar, pasta to support the 715 people included in Bishkek's "Disabled People's Society". Sisenko Larisa Ivanovna, who is Chairman of the Board of the Society of Disabled People, gave special praise to the Red Petroleum management for its compassion, generosity and social responsibility. (http://www.redpetroleum.kg/about/news/?PAGEN_1=5)

The work of the internationally based British Petroleum coupled with the contributions of Kyrgyzstan's Red Petroleum company is a tribute to social maturity of the petroleum companies operating in the former USSR. This is a clear indication that their most important industry recognizes that a successful business not only makes money and employs people, but also works as part of the community.