



USAID
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KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Disabled Receive Better Access

NGO advocacy campaign results in city government making special provision for the disabled



*At a workshop on advocacy planning.
Photo: Counterpart*

With training and funding from USAID, a local NGO achieves the enforcement of the law on the access to government buildings for people with disabilities .

As a result of an advocacy campaign supported by USAID and Counterpart, the authorities in the Kazakh city of Karagandy have agreed to equip the city's main government building with a ramp for people in wheelchairs. It has also set up a commission to carry out the disability provisions of Kazakhstan's law on new and reconstructed buildings. The law stipulates that such buildings should be readily accessible for people with disabilities, but in practice it is often ignored.

The advocacy campaign in Karagandy was undertaken by Tirlik, a Karagandy-based Disabled Persons Organization, and funded by USAID through a grant provided by Counterpart. In organizing the campaign Tirlik drew on advocacy training that USAID and Counterpart provided for this and fourteen other disabled persons organizations. Training discussed how to plan an advocacy campaign and engage stakeholders, which mechanisms to use when channeling advocacy messages, and how to organize public hearings. "The training provided practical examples from the local context and the trainer referred to her personal advocacy experience, said one of the participants, Kairat Imanaliev. "This helped enormously in getting a clear picture about the mechanism of channeling of advocacy messages to key stakeholders."

With USAID and Counterpart's support Tirlik mobilized other disabled persons organizations and organized a campaign about the compliance with the aforesaid law. The campaign aimed at encouraging the government in Karagandy to ensure that all new and rebuilt city buildings are accessible to people with disabilities. The campaign involved two public hearings attended by city officials, specialists, and disabled people's organizations which called on the city government to uphold the disability provisions of the building law. With support from USAID and Counterpart, Tirlik received legal advice from leading Kazakhstani organizations working with similar issues.

As a result of the advocacy campaign, the Karagandy city authorities allocated 1,500,000 Tenge (\$12,500) to construct a wheelchair ramp into the city's main government building. The authorities also pledged to build additional ramps, indicating that these would be the starting point of a major effort to apply the disability provisions of the building law. The city government also set up a building commission to monitor implementation of the law, and invited Tirlik's Executive Director Ms. Rosa Petrus to become a commission member.