



CASE STUDY

US Tour Gives Start to a New Center

A woman creates a child rights center in a small Tajik town



"I wanted to create a place where children would receive the support they need," says Hairinisso Elmurodova, Bokhtar, Tajikistan. Photo: ACCELS

A USAID study program inspires a Tajik woman to open a center that addresses the needs of orphaned, disabled, and impoverished children.

Today Hairinisso Elmurodova is a director of a child's rights center focusing on the support of orphaned, disabled and impoverished children from families of Tajikistan's Bokhtar District. Elmurodova created this center using a facility she saw during a study visit to the United States organized by the USAID Community Connections program.

Hairinisso Elmurodova was a trainer at a public association promoting women's rights in Bokhtar City. In 2008, she became one of ten Tajik women to spend three weeks in Iowa, the United States through a USAID training program for women leaders. The trip included a series of meetings and visits to various non-governmental and government organizations to familiarize the Tajik participants with the women's activism in the United States. One of the visits was to a resource center for children, which gave the inspiration to Elmurodova. "I thought it would be great to have something like that in Tajikistan," says the woman.

After her return, Elmurodova began working to bring her ideas into reality. Elmurodova founded the Shodi organization, which became the basis for the center for children. "I wanted to create a place where children would receive the support they need," says Elmurodova. Currently, the center provides various services to children who are in need of medical or psychological care, or support for the development of their recreational and professional skills. The center also works to raise awareness among the general population about the situation of such children.

Moreover, Elmurodova and her center succeeded in what few local NGOs achieve: she obtained land from local authorities to build a new facility for the center, as the old one is too small to accommodate the increasing inflow of the Bokhtar children in need of care. As soon as all the permits are finalized, the construction of a new building will begin, and Elmurodova is already busy fundraising with local and international organizations.

"We need to work with marginalized children so that they feel cared for by the community," says Elmurodova. "The children enjoy what the community of Bokhtar and various international organizations offer to them. "In turn, the children who visit our center feel they can benefit the society by selling their handicrafts," says the director of the center.