



SUCCESS STORY

Teaching Made Easier Benefits Pupils

USAID helped update Tajikistan's primary school curriculum to improve teaching and help pupils learn



Photo: Quality Learning Project

Sayohat Faiziddinova is using a child-centered methodology introduced by USAID as part of the new National Primary Curriculum Standards.

“The new curriculum standards clearly show each lesson’s learning objective and what knowledge and skill we should require from each child.”

–Sayohat Faiziddinova,
primary teacher, secondary
school #12, Kurgan Teppe,
Khatlon, Tajikistan

Sayohat Faiziddinova is one of 2,000 primary school teachers across Tajikistan that is using the new Primary School Curriculum Standards, which were updated recently with USAID support. “Teaching is easy now,” says Faiziddinova, who works at secondary school # 12 in Tajikistan’s south.

Like many teachers in Tajikistan, just a year ago Sayohat was using a teacher-centered approach with old textbooks and curriculum standards inherited from the Soviet education system. Setting out learning objectives and goals for each lesson was not part of Soviet era teaching practice. Teachers were given the curriculum standards, which is what they had to accomplish in a year. But they weren’t told how to achieve those standards. They knew the general topic to present to pupils, but they weren’t told how to conduct a lesson or how to present the material. “That took a lot of work time, because for each lesson I had to think about and plan what to tell my pupils,” says Sayohat.

To improve curriculum standards and to make them more relevant to the school’s needs, USAID, together with Tajikistan’s Academy of Education, undertook to reform the primary school standards.

Once the new curriculum standards – what each pupil was learn each year – were restructured, USAID enlisted support from teachers in 50 schools to review the standards. Sayohat says in her 23 years of teaching experience it was the first time that ordinary school teachers were given a voice to provide input on the national education standards and to suggest improvements.

The new curriculum standards contain specific, measurable learning outcomes. Now primary school teachers can use them as the reference point for their lesson planning and teaching. That is especially beneficial to Tajikistan, where the quality of education is low and the limited resources available to the government leave the country struggling to meet the standards demanded by the 21st century.

“The new curriculum standards clearly show each lesson’s learning objective and what knowledge and skill we should require from each child,” says Sayohat. USAID believes helping Tajik school children get the most out of their lessons and their schools is one step toward a better future for Tajikistan.