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**TAJIKISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# No More Wait for Water

**USAID and Mercy Corps work with communities to build critical infrastructure for economic development and resource conflict mitigation**



Photo: Mercy Corps/Clay Westrope

*Saidakbar Devlokhov, above, stands next to a tap stand that is part of the new drinking water system in his village.*

***“The water in this tea is from the new drinking water system in our village. Now I can get it anytime I need.”***

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“The water in this tea is from the new drinking water system in our village,” 42-year old Saidakbar Devlokhov proudly explains while sipping black tea from his small cup. “Now I can get it anytime I need.”

After years of neglect, the existing drinking water system in his village had fallen into disrepair. Residents of his picturesque village had to walk more than a quarter of a mile to the source to fetch water for everyday needs. Fetching water is a difficult and time-consuming chore and often the responsibility of children as parents are busy with other family needs.

“Not only did we have to walk a long distance and carry the water back, but often the water was dirty, especially in the summer,” explains Saidakbar. “Before, I had to borrow a donkey from a neighbor and needed help from my oldest son to fill two barrels of water. Now I can have my youngest son fetch water himself whenever we need it.”

The Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program, a USAID and Mercy Corps program, works with members of rural communities to build new or rehabilitate crumbling infrastructure in order to jumpstart economic growth and reduce conflict over community resources. Currently there are three functional water tap stands in Saidakbar’s village with plans for up to ten more.

“I can now spend more of my time working on projects that make money and less time worrying about the health of my family,” says Saidakbar, leader of the community action group that mobilizes community members and makes decisions on behalf of the community. His children benefit by not having to spend as much time collecting water – the time saved can be used to study.

Realizing that the system would need regular maintenance, the community action group decided to implement a monthly fee of \$0.22 from all households. They have also paid a salary to two engineers tasked with keeping the system running during the winter months.

“I don’t get a salary for my work as the community action group leader,” says Saidakbar happily, taking another sip of tea. “Seeing my community living with better conditions is salary enough.”