



Regional Newsletter

September-October 2012

Kazakhstan

USAID-Sponsored Entrepreneurs Return from Three-Week Trip to the USA Ten Kazakhstani entrepreneurs from the livestock and poultry sector recently returned from spending three weeks in the United States as part of the joint USAID/Government of Kazakhstan Business Connections Project. The entrepreneurs traveled throughout Nebraska and Kansas, meeting with various U.S.-based companies and discussing possibilities for partnerships. This was the third group of Kazakhstani entrepreneurs who traveled to the USA as part of the project. Each group represents a different sector of the economy.

U.S. Trade Experts Present New Silk Road Strategies for Cross-border Trade in Central Asia and Afghanistan

Over 300 Central Asian trade experts gathered for two days of strategic discussion on improving trade within Central Asia -including Afghanistan - and new opportunities for trade expansion to Western markets. Government ministries, private businesses, foreign trade missions and financial institutions discussed the development of trade enterprises and shared perspectives on market potential, risk management and how to stimulate export regionally. Presently only 4.4 percent of exports from the region go to other Central Asian countries. The Program for Economic Development, jointly funded by the government of Kazakhstan, seeks to increase cross-border trade.



Photo: participants networking at the Central Asian Trade Forum



Photo: Loan officers put their new skills to work.

Loan Officers Encourage Energy Efficiency USAID through the Central Asian Energy Efficiency Support Program (CAEESP) is assisting the Government of Kazakhstan with implementing the energy efficiency law and promoting energy efficiency in the region. In late August, CAEESP cooperated with the Asia Credit Fund (ACF) to provide its regional loan officers with skills to market loans to rural residents for household and energy improvements. As a participant in USAID’s Development Credit Authority loan guarantee program, ACF provides small loans for residential energy efficiency projects. The loan officers are now equipped to consult with their clients on possible energy efficiency measures, and how to prioritize in order to save the most energy.

Launch of the “Umai” Project in Kazakhstan Kazakhstan Association on Sexual and Reproductive Health (KMPA), a local Kazakhstani NGO, was awarded a two year grant to increase access of men and women of reproductive age to quality family planning services and information on modern methods of contraception. The project will also give health workers the opportunity to advance their qualifications and upgrade their knowledge and skills, including peer to peer training on family planning topics, sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention. This program supports the USAID Forward goals of building the strength of local organizations and will conduct its work in the Almaty and Kyzylorda Oblasts.



Community Water Boards Network On September 15th the Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water project conducted the 2nd Community Water Boards Network Conference in Dushanbe. Fifty-three community water board members from Hisor, Tursunzoda, Shahrinav, Rudaki, Vakhsh, Sarband, Bokhtar, Khuroson and Fayzabad townships attended the event. The main objective of the local Community Water Boards is to operate and maintain newly rehabilitated and constructed community water systems.

Photo: Water Board leaders show what they've learned. USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project



Donor Coordination on Food Security Food security is a top line priority in the government of Tajikistan's National Development Strategy and upcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy. At a recent Donor Coordination Council meeting on food security, USAID presented information on the USG-supported Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the gold standard of household level health surveys, which is being implemented for the first time in Tajikistan in partnership with the Statistics Agency and the Ministry of Health. A joint statement on donors' commitment and approach to food security will also be presented at the government of Tajikistan's Development Forum later this year.



Healthy Food for A Healthy Child The USAID Family Farming program initiated a training program on "Complementary Feeding for Children" in twelve districts of Khatlon Oblast. Participants in these trainings are women of childbearing age and those with children up to five years old. The Family Farming program presented quick, healthy recipes using readily available ingredients. Women learned how to prepare carrot and cabbage salads, mashed potatoes with vegetables, and pancakes using milk products and vegetables available in most homes. Women were also informed of the significance of exclusive breast feeding during the first six months of a child's life.

Photo: A young girls tastes vegetable purée prepared by her mother.

Tajikistan Welcomes new Country Director Kathleen McDonald, the new USAID Country Director in Tajikistan, attended a ceremony inaugurating a new solar water heating system at an orphanage #4 in Dushanbe. The project was completed by USAID's Energy Efficiency project in collaboration with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia and the Dushanbe City Administration. It exemplifies the potential of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to meet the needs of urban residential areas.

Ms. McDonald also participated in a project closing event for the Local Development Initiative, which focused on improving potable water and solid waste management services over the past three years. USAID built 57 drinking water systems throughout Tajikistan, providing 191,000 people with access to clean drinking water.

Ms. McDonald also attended an event recognizing the USAID Quality Learning Project, which in coordination with the Ministry of Education and its affiliates, focused on improving school programs, teacher training, and updating and promoting new educational materials. USAID is complementing this project with a new two year Reading for Children program for pre-primary education.

Photo: USAID staff learns about new solar water heating system in local orphanage.



Turkmenistan



New valuation businesses emerge USAID assisted Turkmenistan in the development of the country's national valuation system, promoting valuation reforms and sponsoring a series of valuation trainings for 60 individuals in partnership with a local public association and government stakeholders. USAID was involved in revising the country's draft law on valuation activity, proposing improvements to the legislation to align it with international best practice and supporting the development of valuation course curriculum and materials, which are now a core component of the ongoing capacity building program and are being used by local training academies such as the School of Economy and Business. Over 20 graduates of

USAID-sponsored trainings are now actively engaged in the valuation market as trainers and experts. In 2012 alone, graduates of these programs have established five new valuation companies, promoting competition in a growing market. *Photo: Managers of the new "Maslahat Hyzmat" valuation company evaluate real estate property. Credit: Deloitte*

USAID/Turkmenistan Quality Learning Project close out ceremony Participants from the USAID Quality Learning Project, joined by local partner Economic Society "Hemayat" and staff from the GIZ Education project, gathered to learn about the achievements that the project made and its success in developing a training program that meets the needs of higher education teachers and students in Turkmenistan. Hemayat, in cooperation with the USAID Quality Learning Project, gained tremendous capacity to sustainably carry out educational activities focused on interactive methods of teaching and will continue to spread these new skills.

USAID Sponsors Sports Management Seminar in Turkmenistan

USAID sponsored a four-day seminar on international best practices in organizing large-scale sporting events. This was the first joint seminar on sports held with the government of Turkmenistan and the United States. Responding to requests for greater cooperation in this area, USAID brought seven international experts to share their knowledge in areas such as venue management, hospitality and logistics, the staging of medal awards ceremonies, financial management, and general operations and marketing. Over the course of the seminar, expert participants from five countries made presentations, answered questions, and visited sports-related infrastructure sites which are under construction for the Asian Indoors and Martial Arts Games (AIMAG), to be held in 2017. Participants from many agencies of the Turkmen government participated in the seminar, including representatives of the National Institute of Sport and Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and Development, the Ministry of Culture and those responsible for television and radio broadcasting. *Photo: International guest experts observe a figure skating performance.*



Antenatal Care Assessment USAID, through the Quality Health Care project, continued its cooperation with national and international partners by providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMIT) in conducting an assessment of antenatal care. A team of ten Turkmen national trainers were led by four WHO experts and the MOHMIT's Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology in conducting assessments in Ahal, Mary, and Lebap provinces. The team presented results and recommendations to MOHMIT for improving antenatal care services in Turkmenistan. The recommendations will be utilized as the country develops its new "Mother and Newborn Health Program for 2013-2017," a national program aimed at improving the quality of health care services for mothers and newborns. *Photo: antenatal care consultation.*



USAID Sponsors Conference on Uzbek Civil Society’s Role in Governance On September 14-15, the National Human Rights Center of Uzbekistan, the prime government of Uzbekistan interlocutor on human rights issues, and USAID’s Legal Support for Civil Society project co-chaired the “Effective Mechanisms for Participation of Civil Society Institutions in Exercising Public Control” conference. Over 100 Uzbek civil society leaders and government officials gathered to discuss three draft laws that, if adopted and implemented, will create a framework for civil society participation in local and national governance. USAID’s implementing partner the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law has been working closely with Uzbek counterparts in government and civil society to draft laws on social partnership, public control, and transparency as a response to President Karimov’s concept for democratic reform. Akmal Saidov, Director of the National Human Rights Center, has indicated that he will organize additional public hearings to discuss the legislation with citizens, civil society organizations, and government stakeholders. USAID welcomed this conference as a positive sign that the government of Uzbekistan is increasingly open to working with USAID and civil society organizations to draft, review, and finalize governance-related legislation.

Prosecutors as defenders of human rights Judge John Tunheim returned to Uzbekistan for his eighth visit since 2001 to lead training for Uzbek prosecutors on their role in defending human rights. Two former U.S. prosecutors supported Judge Tunheim in the training. Participants included a Supreme Court judge, the director and senior faculty of the prosecutor’s training center and younger prosecutors from all regions of Uzbekistan. Judge Tunheim discussed basic principles of habeas corpus, victims’ rights and international standards for the principle of innocent until proven guilty. The primary audience of younger prosecutors from the regions participated actively in all sessions. Dr. Tolibjon Umarov, director of the prosecutor’s training center, will publish materials from this workshop in a national journal and incorporate them into the center’s permanent curriculum. This training was supported through USAID’s Ombudsman and Advocates Training Support (OATS) program that has been implemented by the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative and the Regional Dialogue organization. *Photo: Judge Terheim engages the group in discussion.*



Strengthening Collaboration between Prisons and General Health Care Services to Improve TB Control

From September 18-20, the TB CARE Project supported a consensus building workshop in Tashkent that brought together, for the first time, officials from the National Tuberculosis Program and Prison Administration Medical Department. The aim of the meeting was to improve coordination between the prison sector and general TB services in the area of TB control. Participants at the meeting reviewed issues such as palliative care for TB patients and continuing treatment for released prisoners. They also discussed country developments in TB control

including the availability of rapid diagnostic tools such as GeneXpert, and assessed the potential impact of these developments on TB prevention, case management and treatment in the prison sector. With the assistance of USAID’s TB CARE project, partners jointly developed a three year plan for collaboration between the National TB Program and the Prison Service that will lead to a more integrated framework for TB control in prisons.

Photo: TB expert explains the need for proper infection control in prisons. Credit: KNCV Foundation

For more information about USAID in Central Asia go to:

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