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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Educator Promotes Innovative Methods

A teacher promotes new learning methods to expand opportunities for rural children



Baymyrat (on the left) and his colleagues at a training on interactive teaching methods. Photo: "Alma Mater" Teachers' Association

A USAID-sponsored study tour to the United States inspired a Turkmen teacher to share his knowledge on effective teaching methods with other educators to enhance learning experiences in isolated rural schools.

Baymyrat Korhanov is an experienced teacher of German and English languages at a small school in Yangala Village some 40 kilometers from the capital city Ashgabat. While teaching approaches in the region are usually limited to lecture-style, recently, he has begun introducing interactive methods not only in his own classes, but to the work of other educators as well.

In 2007, Baymyrat won an opportunity to participate in a study tour in the United States through the USAID Community Connections program. Together with nine other Turkmen school administrators and teachers, Baymyrat spent three weeks in Seattle attending an intensive training program on school management. The program focused on the best practices in the U.S. education system, cutting-edge school management strategies, student-centered teaching methodologies, and effective parent-teacher activities, and included visits to educational facilities. "I am glad that I had a chance to see different U.S. schools and learn how they are managed. I was impressed by the efforts made to involve parents into their children's school life", said Baymyrat.

The study tour in the United States inspired Baymyrat to share his experience with his colleagues. Since his return home, Baymyrat has conducted multiple training sessions for the administration and teachers his own school, as well as specialists from other schools of his district. He now trains education professionals together with the Turkmen teachers' association Alma Mater.

One of the driving forces for Baymyrat is his desire to impact learning processes in rural areas, where access to innovation and information is especially limited. To do this, he began collaboration in 2008 with the Soltan Dag Education Center to organize English, German and Russian language courses in several schools of Gektepe Region. At the center, young people that are eager to learn foreign languages can attend the courses for a small fee.

In the future, Baymyrat Korhanov plans to develop and publish a manual for teachers on how interactive teaching techniques can be used for extracurricular activities. He also would like to conduct new training programs with Alma Mater and organize free language courses for orphans from rural areas.