



USAID
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KAZAKHSTAN

CASE STUDY

One Course To Change Entire System

USAID partners with private sector to upgrade vocational education in Kazakhstan.



Program coordinator Gaukhar Yesentayeva, KAB newly certified teacher Smagulova Gulmira, and certified trainer Svetlana Brutchikova.
Photo: Pragma

USAID, together with Chevron and Baker Hughes, is working to introduce a tailor-designed course on entrepreneurship to vocational schools, so that Kazakhstan's youth have better employment opportunities.

Challenge

International surveys indicate that Kazakhstan's education system has not been providing the country's youth with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills required to develop a competitive, diversified and innovation-driven economy. While universities are receiving help to upgrade their programs, vocational education has been largely left out of the effort. A few donors did try a "vertical" approach that selects a small number of pilot schools and tries to modernize them, however, this strategy has not produced visible impact so far.

Initiative

In early 2009, USAID has partnered with two American oil and gas sector companies to modernize a significant number of vocational schools by implementing one key course across the country. American companies Chevron and Baker Hughes provided funds to USAID's Kazakhstan Business Development Project to train over 400 teachers in all sixteen administrative districts of the country to teach the "Know About Business" course in vocational schools.

The course was designed by the International Labor Organization (ILO) as a global program to increase employment opportunities for youth through vocational education systems. The course covers such topics as "What is an enterprise?", "How to become an entrepreneur", "How to find a good business-idea", "How to start your business", "How to elaborate a business-plan." The course also includes an innovative game which simulates the process of starting a business.

Result

USAID's project has already trained over 300 teachers in Aktau, Atyrau, Almaty and Astana. Starting September 2009, the first 20,000 students have begun studying the course in those four cities. By 2010, the USAID project will have trained teachers in all 16 administrative districts of Kazakhstan. Each of these educations will be able to teach multiple "Know About Business" classes comprising over 200 students during a school year, so that up to 100,000 students will be receiving the course by 2011 annually.

The Kazakh government has already agreed to finance an additional training of teachers in Aktau, and a German vocational education project is funding teacher training in Taraz, Kostenai, and Astana. If the initiative keeps gathering supporters along the way, soon all 860 vocational schools in Kazakhstan will be offering this tailored entrepreneurship course to the country's 600,000 vocational students.