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KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

SUCCESS STORY

Interactive Methods Reap Awards

With USAID assistance, Kyrgyz educators are moving beyond Soviet-style methods



Kenjebaeva during a lesson with her 6th-graders at the Murdash village secondary school, Alai district, Osh region. Photo: CREATIVE

“Due to the USAID trainings, my attitude toward the school, children, learning, everyday lessons, colleagues, and children's parents changed dramatically. But most importantly, I became a much better teacher for my students.”

- Kyrgyzstan's "Best Teacher of 2009" Nurmiza Kenjebaeva.

In early October, President of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiev bestowed the “Best Teacher of 2009” award upon a Kyrgyz participant of a USAID education program. “I owe this award to the training I received from the USAID Quality Learning Project,” said teacher Nurmiza Kenjebaeva.

Kenjebaeva teaches Kyrgyz language and literature at the Murdash village secondary school 20 kilometers from the Alai district center in Osh region, one of the most remote and hardest to reach areas in Kyrgyzstan. Twenty-eight-year old Kenjebaeva is among 600 teachers trained by the USAID Quality Learning Project in interactive teaching methods over the past two years.

The USAID project taught Kenjebaeva to set learning objectives instead of teaching objectives and to lead interactive classes where not only the teacher but also students can serve as a source of information for the class. The educator also learned to assess how the students are progressing towards the learning objectives and to apply follow-up activities to improve the learning results.

Kenjebaeva says that her students felt “lectured to” and bored under the old style of teaching. “I came to understand the advantages of group work in class and cooperative planning of lessons,” said Kenjebaeva who has noticed that now her students are more likely to ask questions and engage in discussions with their teacher and peers. “I also learned how to develop effective questions for students, and how to correctly direct the student towards the lesson’s objectives,” said Kenjebaeva.

The methodologies that the project promotes have been approved for all Kyrgyzstan’s in-service teacher training institutes. In 2009, more than 33,000 secondary school students in Kyrgyzstan will be learning with teachers that have been trained by the USAID project plans. As the new methodologies reach more and more teachers, by 2012, the number of students exposed to the new learning methodologies should exceed 153,000.

“My attitude toward the school, children, learning, everyday lessons, colleagues, and children's parents changed dramatically,” said Kenjebaeva about the impact USAID’s training had on her. “But most importantly, I became a much better teacher for my students.”