



SUCCESS STORY

Pickling Preserves Food for Winter

USAID trains women how to keep fruits and vegetables for winter consumption



Food preservation training is increasing household food supplies for winter months. Photo: USAID

“On behalf of all the women of our village I thank the USAID program for this training. We obtained a lot of information concerning the technology of food preservation, which will greatly assist us to have sufficient and safe food supplies during the winter.”

Barno Hozrakulova, beneficiary of the USAID Water User Association Support Program.

Rural families in Tajikistan traditionally supplement their income and food supply with vegetables and fruits they produce in their backyards. Over the past couple of years, the increasingly harsh economic conditions in the country and inclement weather have increased food prices beyond what many villagers can afford, and home-grown foods have become the major source of food for many of the rural families. However, having relied mostly on the purchased foods in winter, villagers had little knowledge how to prepare vegetables and fruits so that they can be stored beyond the summer season.

To help the villagers prepare greater quantities of food for use during the winter season, the USAID Water User Association Support Program (implemented by Winrock International) offered food preservation training for women in the Rudaki, Shaartuz, and Kabodiyon districts. The USAID program organized 50 training sessions in various villages and taught 1,000 women to prepare salads, pickles, jams, compotes, and other preserves using various fruits and vegetables from their gardens. Women saw how to make safe and healthy preserves of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, cherries, apricots, apples, strawberries, grapes, and plums.

“I received lots of useful information which I now apply,” says 53-year old Barno Hozrakulova, a member of the USAID-supported Sayod Water User Association, about the USAID-sponsored training. Hozrakulova plans to organize a women’s group, purchase a squeezer-juicer for compotes, and open a shop where to sell food preserves prepared by herself and other women in the community. “I hope that all knowledge I gained at the trainings will help my plans materialize,” says Hozrakulova.

As a result of the training, participants now have the knowledge and skills needed to preserve food in a reliable manner that will decrease spoilage and ensure safe consumption. A survey in Shaartuz and Kubodiyon showed a 30% increase in the available food supply for off-season consumption in the assisted villages. “Last year we used only cucumber and tomato for preserves, but this year we were able to preserve all fruits and vegetables available in our region and have doubled the amount of the food we set aside for winter,” says another beneficiary, Makhfirat Saidrahmonova, a member of the Khoja Goib Water User Association.

“On behalf of all the women of our village I thank the USAID program for this training,” says Hozrakulova. “We obtained a lot of information concerning the technology of food preservation, which will greatly assist us to have sufficient and safe food supplies during the winter.”