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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Study Tour Inspires Innovation

A U.S. study tour brings innovations to education in Turkmenistan



Djemilya Sarjayeva (seated in the center) with the members of the Turan Mugallym Association. Photo: Valentina Kardashova

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Djemilya Sarjayeva, participant of the USAID Community Connections program.

A USAID-sponsored study tour has inspired the head of a teachers association to expand the associations services and served as a launching pad for her career changes.

Djemilya Sarjayeva heads the *Turan Mugallym* (Central Asian Teacher) teachers association, which is one of the few community organizations in Turkmenistan that successfully operate in the field of education through collaboration with government and international organizations.

Recently Sarjayeva was one of the Turkmen education specialists to participate in a study tour on school management, arranged by the USAID Community Connections program. Together with nine other Turkmen educators she spent three weeks in the United States learning how schools and other organizations work to improve school management practices and teaching methods.

“I was greatly impressed by private schools which I have always advocated for,” said Sarjayeva. In Turkmenistan, most schools are government-run. “We were also able to meet with U.S. school management specialists representing various education institutions. This resulted in a better understanding of the U.S. education system and policy on education,” she noted.

Upon return to Turkmenistan, Sarjayeva initiated a Teachers’ Board at *Turan Mugallym* following a model that she learned about in the United States. She also enhanced the professional development trainings aimed at preparation of specialists for association branches operating in other regions of the country. These trainings make membership in *Turan Mugallym* more attractive to potential members since quality professional development opportunities for Turkmenistan teachers are rare. Additionally, Sarjayeva changed the English language course curriculum provided by *Turan Mugallym* which will result in more effective learning for students.

In recognition of her superior skills and services, Sarjayeva was appointed Head of the English Language Department at the Academy of Sciences. “The knowledge I received from USAID study tour is invaluable for my current professional activities,” said Sarjayeva, whose new duties include working with over 350 graduate students from various research institutions and higher education institutions.