



**USAID**  
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**TAJIKISTAN**

## CASE STUDY

# Threading a Path to Independence

**Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program empowers young women with income generating skills.**



Mercy Corps/Clay Westrope

*Bibioisha displays the dresses and embroidered items that she has made since learning the necessary skills in a three-month training.*

***“I enjoy sewing and the independence it gives me... I am proud to be able to be a productive member of my family.”***

Bibioisha Saidkhojeva sits, needle in hand, surrounded by her colorful labors of love... and economic independence. Embroidered pillowcases, curtains and meticulously sewn dresses are strewn about the floor as Bibioisha explains the importance of sewing. “I enjoy sewing and the independence it gives me,” says 19-year old Bibioisha. “I plan to continue sewing after I get married to help provide money for my new family.”

In the small mountain community of Mienadu, there are few employment opportunities for anyone, especially young women like Bibioisha. In partnership with community sewing masters, the Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program, a USAID-funded program operating in the Tavildara Valley since 2009, has conducted a three-month sewing training course for girls in the community.

“I have already sold about 18 dresses in a local shop and have been able to pay off a 64 Tajiki somoni (US\$15) debt,” says Bibioisha, diligently continuing to embroider the set of pillowcases she is making for a newly married couple. “I’m planning on buying a new sewing machine and to continue teaching other girls in my community the skills I have learned. I already have four students.”

Using the money that Bibioisha has made from selling her creations to help her family buy food and make repairs to the house has placed her in an important position in her household. With a family of 10 people, Bibioisha’s parents need all the help they can get.

“These will sell for 55 somoni each,” explains Bibioisha as she holds up the nearly completed embroidered pillowcases. “I am proud to be able to be productive member of my family.”

The decades of neglect in war-affected Rasht Valley have led to extremely high unemployment and poverty. To address high rates of youth unemployment and food insecurity, USAID works with “at-risk” youth to strengthen their skills and increase their employment opportunities.