



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**TAJIKISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# A Shot at Shear Success

**USAID and Mercy Corps work with communities to train vulnerable youth for productive employment**



Photo: Mercy Corps/Clay Westrope

*Amarjon Abdusamadov, standing, carefully uses the skills he has learned in his barber course on one satisfied customer.*

***“Many of my friends are talking about moving to Russia to find work. I want to stay here to help improve my community.”***

Amarjon Abdusamadov stands poised with scissors in hand ready to take on his next customer. One month into his training, he exudes confidence but works with a careful hand. His barber’s coat belies his young age of 18.

“I had just graduated from high school and needed a job to help my family,” says Abdusamadov, halting his careful cuts. “There are six people in my family and my older brother is the only one with a job. He is working in Russia.”

With equipment supplied by the Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program, implemented by USAID since 2009, and work space supplied by the community, eight young men from Mahramat and surrounding villages two hours outside the northern city of Khujand are being trained as barbers. Each apprentice studies for two months with a master barber, and may eventually open shops of their own. “There are not many opportunities for jobs in my village,” explains Abdusamadov. “I enjoy this work and want to continue it. I want to build my parents a new house and save money for a family of my own.”

His hopes of a career as a barber were further encouraged when the school director in the village offered him a room at the school to open his shop once his training is complete. With the possibility of earning \$180 to \$200 per month as a master trainer, Abdusamadov’s dreams are closer to coming true.

“Many of my friends are talking about moving to Russia to find work. I want to stay here to help improve my community,” Abdusamadov says with a proud final clip of his customer’s hair.

According to the Ministry of Interior, each year approximately 400,000 migrants travel from Tajikistan to Russia in search of work. To address high rates of youth unemployment and food insecurity, USAID works with at-risk youth to build their trade skills and enhance employment opportunities.