



## USAID Newsletter

March-April 2012

### Regional News



**USAID Supports Early Reading.** More than 75 multilingual and multicultural educators from across Central Asia came together in Almaty to strategize about how to improve the reading skills of students in their countries at the end of February. USAID supported participation by representatives of the Ministries of Education and related agencies for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in an International Reading Association conference so they could share ideas and activities for improving reading comprehension as they fine-tune their approach toward future early grade reading emphasis.



**Regional Workshop on Programmatic Management to Strengthen M/XDR-TB Control in Central Asia.** USAID's TB CARE held a regional workshop on programmatic management of multi-drug resistant TB and extremely drug-resistant TB (M/XDR TB) April 18-20 in Almaty with representatives of the Global Fund, KNCV TB Foundation, WHO, USAID Quality Health Care Project, USAID Dialogue Project, as well as other partners involved in M/XDR-TB programs. Participants presented the latest

evidence and practice for the development of effective TB M/XDR control policies, discussed the management of drug-resistant TB with input from the national TB control programs, and shared their vision for the implementation of the Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat TB (M/XDR) in WHO European Region, particularly in Central Asia, 2011-2015. *Photo: WHO Consultant Kai Blondal discusses challenges and opportunities for GeneXpert implementation*

### Kazakhstan

**HIV Mothers and Children Event.** On March 4, 19 mothers and their daughters gathered at "Youth Power" Center in Almaty in recognition of International Women's Day. Raising kids can be hard enough, but it is even more difficult for HIV positive mothers in Kazakhstan. HIV patients face difficulty accessing services and are often discriminated against in employment and housing opportunities. The USAID Dialogue Project works with people living with HIV to help them access quality prevention, treatment, and care services. The project empowers women living with HIV to advocate for better services and to end stigma and discrimination.



**USAID Recognizes World TB Day.** Kazakhstan's tuberculosis (TB) epidemic presents a major challenge to the country's health care system and continued health and economic development. According to the World Health Organization, over 28,500 TB cases were registered in Kazakhstan in 2011. The country also has high and growing rates of multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB, with more than one in four new TB cases in Kazakhstan diagnosed as MDR TB, which is much harder to treat and causes the majority of TB-related deaths in Kazakhstan. USAID is working with the government of Kazakhstan to address high rates of MDR TB through support for the introduction of GeneXpert rapid diagnostic testing, which will allow for an MDR TB diagnosis within a few hours instead of a few weeks. This diagnostic tool will be

used in Almaty, Akmola, and East Kazakhstan Oblast. *Photo: Dr. Shakimurat Ismoilov displays his patient's X-ray showing damaged lungs*

## Tajikistan



**USAID Launches Feed the Future Program.** On May 8, Ambassador Gross and Erin McKee, Regional Mission Director for USAID/Central Asian Republics, were joined by the Deputy Prime Minister for the official launch of the United States Government's Feed the Future Initiative. The goal of Feed the Future Tajikistan is to sustainably raise the income of over 250,000 people in 12 target districts in Khatlon Province and to improve nutrition knowledge, food availability, and household utilization of food to address under-nutrition and improve maternal and child health. In the targeted districts, the program aims to reduce the poverty rate from 54% to 45% over

five years and stunting of children under five years old from 37% to 26%. *Photo: Participants and the Regional Mission Director pose before a project display.*



**USAID Supports Cross-border Energy Trade.** On the heels of the successful Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V), USAID, together with the Aga Khan Foundation USA and in close collaboration with the Pamir Energy Company, signed an agreement to foster cross-border energy trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. USAID, through its Regional Energy Security, Efficiency, and Trade (RESET) project, will provide \$785,000 in addition to nearly \$140,000 donated by the Aga Khan Foundation USA to help Pamir Energy extend electricity lines across the border from Tajikistan to Afghanistan to meet the energy needs of the

Shugnan District in Afghanistan's Badakhshon province. The project will bring electricity to the Tizhmoy, Pidrud, and Viyod villages. All work will be completed in 15 months. The expansion of cross-border distribution lines to these additional villages in Shugnan district will help promote energy cooperation in the region, foster regional economic activity, and facilitate the development of small-scale commercial enterprises in the district. *Photo: David Keith, Vice President, Tetra Tech with Dr. Mirza Jahani, Chief Executive Officer, Aga Khan Foundation, USA*



**Integrating Diagnostic Tool for Earlier TB Detection and Treatment.** Tajikistan has the second lowest tuberculosis (TB) case detection rate in the WHO European Region. To improve case detection and ensure that health care providers correctly diagnose TB without unnecessary delay, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends using a diagnostic algorithm – a guide that lists the steps to detect, accurately diagnose, and treat TB. Use of the diagnostic algorithm can lead to earlier detection and treatment of patients with TB and prevent transmission of TB to others. Since March 2011, Tajikistan's Ministry of Health and the USAID Quality Health Care Project have been working with health care providers in Dushanbe and Vakhdat primary health care facilities to ensure that the use of the diagnostic algorithm is part of staff-driven improvement plans. Since its introduction, the percentage of TB suspects managed according to the diagnostic algorithm

increased from 60% to 90%. USAID is also working to improve observation of treatment and empower patients to take a more active role in their own treatment to ensure that TB patients are successfully treated. *Photo: A health care provider provides TB treatment to a patient in Dushanbe*



**Earlier Detection and Treatment to Fight Cardiovascular Disease.**

Cardiovascular disease remains the most serious non-communicable public health threat in Central Asia. To counter this looming epidemic, USAID is collaborating with Central Asian governments to improve the quality of cardiovascular disease services for earlier detection and treatment. In Tajikistan, the USAID Quality Health Care Project is collaborating with health care staff in pilot facilities to implement staff-designed quality improvement plans to improve screening of individuals for cardiovascular disease and facilitation of proper treatment. In the last quarter, blood pressure screening rates in three pilot facilities increased from 3% to 100%, with a total of 2,819 individuals screened. In the same facilities, the percent of health care workers adhering to treatment standards for hypertension went from 13% to 88%.

*Photo: A doctor in Vakhdat screens his patient for high blood pressure*

**USAID Supports Improvement of Student Achievements.** The USAID Quality Learning Project supported the Ministry of Education jointly with its national and regional affiliates to review the Olympiads process in Tajikistan at a roundtable on 23-24 February. The project supported the government's participants to discuss their ideas to restructure the Olympiads and identify a strategy to bring them up to date. The group will develop new regulations on Olympiads to support national and regional educational authorities to reform education before the next academic year in 2012. The invited guests from the Ministry of Education and Science jointly with USAID Quality Learning Project staff from the Kyrgyz Republic shared experience and best practices.



**USAID Rehabilitated Drinking Water Supply System in Tursunzoda District.** USAID officially handed over a rehabilitated drinking water system for the residents of Hakikat village on March 27. The Tursunzoda District Chairman Mr. Davlatsho Gulmahmadov led the ceremony along with representatives from USAID, the district and jamoat administrations, and local residents. The project is part of USAID's Local Development Initiative, which works in six districts of Tajikistan to improve the quality of local governance and service delivery. This project brings clean water to 1,800 citizens of the Hakikat village through rehabilitation of an entire small water system, including renovation of a well, replacement of an old pump, replacement of pipes, and repair of the water tank. Ensuring sustainability in the operation of the water supply entities is one of USAID's main goals in Tajikistan. *Photo: Residents of Hakikat village stand next to their new safe drinking water source*



**USAID Holds Competition for Doctors and Nurses on Their HIV Knowledge.** Health care workers from City Health Centers #4 and #10 cheer on the competitors in a USAID Quality Health Care Project contest in honor of International Women's Day. The competition, which was entitled "Ану-ка девушки," tested doctors and nurses on their HIV knowledge, on how to maintain good relationships with most at risk populations, and on their artistic skills, through dancing, singing, and poetry recitation. Family

doctor Aminova Uguloi won the award for Best Female Doctor and Ziyedalieva Matlyuba won the award for Best Female Nurse. The contest was part of the Quality Health Care Project's work with medical professionals, non-governmental organizations and patients to reduce stigma and discrimination against most at risk populations in Tajikistan, many of whom are women.



**Regional Trafficking in Persons Event Focuses on Labor Exploitation.** The challenges of identification and assistance to male victims of labor exploitation in Central Asia were discussed during an event on March 1-2 in Dushanbe, which brought together civil society partner organizations throughout the region. The event, supported by the USAID funded Counter-Trafficking Project, was dedicated to the identification, rehabilitation, and reintegration into home communities of men who have been trafficked for labor exploitation. This USAID funded project has expanded over time from only focusing on

victims of sex-trafficking to include assistance to men as victims of labor exploitation. An assessment done by IOM in 2010 found that 91% of human trafficking in the region involves labor exploitation. This finding resulted in the reconstruction of the USAID supported female shelter in Dushanbe to also accommodate and serve male victims of trafficking. *Photo: USAID Regional Mission Director Erin E. McKee addresses the event*

## Turkmenistan



**Tourism and Hospitality Workshop in Ashgabat.** Junior Achievement, supported by USAID and Chevron Nebitgaz Turkmenistan, organized a three-day Tourism and Hospitality workshop in Ashgabat, April 24-26. The tourism and hospitality industry is fast-growing and a promising sector of Turkmenistan's economy that has received much attention from the President of Turkmenistan. The Tourism and Hospitality workshop is designed to familiarize Turkmen specialists and teachers of tourism and hospitality with

international best practices. Following the workshop, the State Sport and Tourism Committee requested further trainings for hotel staff and Sport and Tourism teachers. The next seminar is planned for June.



**Valuation Specialists Master Skills in USAID Training Program.** On March 5, a group of 21 specialists from economic and financial agencies and private consulting companies completed a three-month training program on the valuation of real estate property. The course was organized by the USAID Macroeconomic Project in partnership with the Union of Economists of Turkmenistan. In addition to learning valuation methods and standards, each participant had a chance to practice by performing an actual assessment, and discuss the results with a panel of valuation experts and regulators. According to

USAID's Country Representative Andrew Segars, who handed over graduation certificates to the participants, "The course represents an important step in the development of Turkmenistan's market economy, and supports the country's reforms in accounting, lending, insurance and taxation." *Photo: A course participant presents his housing valuation project to a panel of experts*

## Uzbekistan

**USAID Engages with Uzbek Ombudsman's Office to Improve Protection of Rights of Women and Children.** USAID's Ombudsman and Advocates Training Support program, implemented by the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), organized a series of trainings with the Uzbek Ombudsman in late February to share international experience in responding to human rights violations. The U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan delivered opening remarks at a workshop following the training of more than 40 participants from the Government of Uzbekistan, including high-ranking officials from the Uzbek Parliament, Prosecutor General's Office, and Ministries of Justice and Interior.



**World TB Day.** The USAID Quality Health Care and the USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB projects marked World TB Day through public awareness events held March 23-30, including a concert at National Conservatory, a press conference at the National Press Center, a scientific conference on tuberculosis (TB) research, treatment, and diagnostics, and training courses for most-at-risk populations. The events aimed to increase public awareness about the TB epidemic. The project has been working to prevent and control TB in Uzbekistan since 2011 and observed World TB Day by supporting activities in pilot sites in rural areas of Tashkent and Samarkand Oblasts and in urban clinics. Events educated the public about the TB problem in Uzbekistan, increased awareness about TB prevention, and underlined the importance of diagnosis and timely treatment. The World TB Day events served as a venue for sharing information about ongoing efforts to fight the disease. *Photo: Participants at the event held at the Sukok clinic in the Parkent region of Tashkent were screened for TB*



**USAID Trains to Improve Communal Services.** In March and April, USAID's Local Development Initiative (LDI) conducted trainings for local government representatives, communal service managers and environmental NGOs in solid waste management, project design, cost and fees, and citizen engagement. All of the workshops were conducted in partnership with LDI's partner institutions, the Academy for State and Social Construction and the Independent Institute for Monitoring Civil Society.

**For more information about USAID in Central Asia go to:**

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