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**KAZAKHSTAN**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Women’s Clinic Diagnosed as Success

**A women’s clinic takes care of its neighbors and shares its successes**

Raza had no access to information on how to take care of her first baby. Living near the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan, an ecologically devastated region plagued by drought, unsafe water, and exhausted farm land, her family was at high risk for serious health problems.



Photo: Counterpart International/Kyle Springer

In order to find work and a better environment for their child, Raza and her husband moved to neighboring Kazakhstan. Coming to Chapayevovo, a small town outside Almaty, Raza found the local women’s clinic, a place filled with free information on prenatal and newborn care — exactly what Raza needed as she expected her second child.

Raza peruses the library at the local women’s clinic to learn about newborn care methods.

***“Before, I didn’t know anything about family planning. Now I know my body needs rest and if I have another child, I’ll wait at least two or three years. While having tea, we mothers often discuss the messages we learn from the clinic,” said Raza, a mother of two, speaking about information learned at USAID-sponsored women’s health clinic.***

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The clinic was opened with support from USAID in 2001 by a group of local women who saw a desperate need for accurate and accessible information on women’s health. During the first year, Director Darya Nikolayevna and her team worked as volunteers. With a grant from USAID, the clinic team built its capacity, purchasing medical equipment, producing brochures on family planning and breast feeding methods in Russian and Kyrgyz, and participating in technical and institution-building trainings. They also compiled a small library of literature on women’s health issues, now in high demand by local mothers.

“Many of us are not rich enough to buy books so the library is a great resource. Honestly I didn’t know the proper methods for taking care of my baby. Now I think I have enough information and help to do it,” Raza said. “Before, I didn’t know anything about family planning. Now I know my body needs rest and if I have another child, I’ll wait at least two or three years. While having tea, we mothers often discuss the messages we learn from the clinic.”

Within a year, the mayor nominated the clinic as the district’s best. The local government now uses the clinic as a model for others to follow, sharing a diagnosis of success.