



USAID Newsletter

July-August 2011

Regional News



Central Asia Trade Forum. In August, USAID's Central Asia Trade Forum was held in Bishkek. The event brought immediate results, including new contracts, skills, partners and opportunities for participating businesses, and it advanced USAID's broader goals of innovation in its programming and local private sector cost sharing. At least 11 deals were made among companies and organizations at the event itself, including new clients, human capital investments and partnership agreements; over 450 participant training hours delivered across 15 master class sessions; over 350 participants represented over 270 organizations and companies from 13 different countries. Kyrgyz Republic President Rosa Otunbayeva's opening remarks praised USAID's work in the country and the Forum's concepts of regional

business cooperation and American-style continuing professional development. The Central Asia Trade Forum was the culminating event of USAID's Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project's (RTLCC) nine-month Export Partnerships Initiative, which created three export partnership groups to develop new exports. At the same time, the Forum set a high standard for USAID-led events targeting the private sector, and set the stage for more innovative and effective business-focused assistance in Central Asia. *(Photo: Participants at the forum exchanging ideas)*

Kazakhstan



USAID Conducts HIV Prevention Workshop for NGOs and Health Sector. On July 4-8, the USAID Quality Health Care Project conducted a workshop in Almaty for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government representatives on HIV prevention for people who inject drugs. In Central Asia, people who inject drugs are vulnerable to contracting HIV through contaminated needles and can unknowingly contribute to the spread of HIV. As part of its work to prevent the spread of HIV in Central Asia, the USAID Quality Health Care Project invited 20 participants, including managers of NGOs that work with people who inject drugs, representatives from the governmental health care sector, and international

partners, to attend the workshop. Project experts and workshop participants discussed HIV prevention and harm reduction, including outreach work, needle and syringe exchange programs, safe injecting practice, medication assisted therapy, anti-retroviral therapy, harm reduction in prisons, and strategic planning for harm reduction programs. The goal of the workshop is to build the capacity of NGO managers and health sector officials to design, manage, and monitor HIV prevention programs for people who inject drugs. *(Photo: Participants of the workshop on HIV prevention and harm reduction for people who inject drugs received certificates upon completion of the conference.)*



USAID and Asian Credit Fund Signed an Agreement. On August 25, USAID and Asian Credit Fund signed an agreement establishing a four-year, \$1 million credit guarantee facility that will support Asian Credit Fund's lending to customers in Kazakhstan to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. USAID's support will allow the Asian Credit Fund to raise liquidity to support this new lending activity. USAID will also provide technical assistance and training to Asian Credit Fund loan officers on identifying and marketing opportunities for residential energy-efficiency investments. USAID and Asian Credit Fund's partnership will provide for reduction in residential energy consumption, improved comfort levels and values of borrowers' homes, and emulation by other financial institutions to expand into the

promising energy-efficiency finance market. *(Photo: Erin McKee (right) Regional Mission Director, USAID Central Asian Republics, shakes hands with Zhanna Zhakupova, Executive Director Asian Credit Fund)*

USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project Improves Referral System in Health Care Facilities in Ust-Kamenogorsk.

The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project successfully introduced a referral voucher system in health care facilities in Ust-Kamenogorsk, which resulted in an order, Prikaz 436, to institutionalize the voucher system. The prikaz improves the quality of free health care services in the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and drug treatment for most-at-risk populations (MARPs), including: sex workers, people who inject drugs, prisoners, and people living with HIV, as well as to ensure effective collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The prikaz makes the provision of free health care services to most-at-risk populations compulsory upon presentation of vouchers, regardless of their place of residence or official residential registration. This was an important step for vulnerable populations to feel confident that they will not be turned away and refused these services.

Tajikistan



USAID Congratulates Family Doctors at Graduation Ceremony. USAID Tajikistan Country Office Director Jeffrey Lehrer and Mr. Abumuslim Temurov, Head of the Dushanbe City Health Department, congratulated the winners of the “Best Team of Family Doctors and Nurses 2011” competition among medical workers in Dushanbe. Deputy Minister of Health Jobirova, Deputy Mayor of Dushanbe Rahimova and Deputy Head of Somoni District Khukumat Maxumova also participated in the award ceremony, which drew over 300 health care workers and their families in an event that also marked the local holiday, “Health Provider Day.” Greater emphasis on family medicine is a key element of the Government’s national health reform strategy, supported by USAID and other donors, in an effort to

increase access to quality medical care while lowering costs by increasing disease prevention, resolving medical cases at an early stage, and reducing excessive reliance on expensive specialist care. *(Photo: Jeffrey Lehrer, USAID Country Director (right) congratulates winners)*



USAID and Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Health Sponsor Tajikistan’s Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance Delegation. In July, USAID and Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Health sponsored a delegation from Tajikistan’s Ministries of Health and Finance to travel to Kyrgyzstan to learn about the country’s health care reform experiences. Tajikistan is preparing an overhaul of its health financing system. After many questions during the tour, Tajik officials are preparing for the work ahead as health care reforms gain momentum within Tajikistan’s government. In the coming months and years, the USAID Quality Health Care Project will be working closely with the Government of Tajikistan and international partners to develop and implement these needed health care reforms to move the country’s health care system past challenges and toward the future. *(Photo: Safar Sayfuddinov (left) greets Kyrgyzstan’s Minister of Health, Sabyrbek Jumabekov (right))*



USAID Rehabilitated Drinking Water Supply System. On July 28 more than 3,500 people of Nov town in Spitamen District in Sughd Province received access to clean drinking water, which was built by USAID Local Development Initiative. The rehabilitated drinking water system has 2,500 meters of pipeline and 30 water taps located close to residential houses. Also, USAID developed technical assessment report of the system and provided recommendations on how to maintain and improve water supply services with active citizens’ participation. *(Photo: Kevin Dean, Deputy Country Director (left) and Rizoiev Inomjon, Deputy Chairman of Spitamen District, at the ribbon cutting ceremony of two new irrigation projects in Tavildara District)*



USAID and Mercy Corps’ Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program Open Irrigation Projects. On July 28, 73 households in Tajikistan’s remote, mountainous, and politically unstable Tavildara region accessed water for their crops thanks to an irrigation system restored by the USAID-funded Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program. Two canals were constructed to bring water over 5 km from high mountain streams along steep slopes to irrigate almost 40 hectares of farmland in the two villages. Prior to the project, these canals had been blocked by landslides, requiring farmers to rely on rain-fed agriculture. USAID’s assistance, along with a community contribution, allowed the canals to be cleared and protected for years to come. *(Photo: USAID and TSEP team)*



Brief Assessment of USAID and Mercy Corps' Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program of Impact of Miyonadu Bridge Collapse. USAID completed other small scale infrastructure projects in Tavildara, including a drinking water system, four new electrical transformers, and a footbridge. The ultimate purpose of the project is to increase community coping mechanisms to economic and natural shocks while improving community-government relations. The footbridge proved a timely example of this effort. On July 18, a vehicle bridge collapsed, leaving the USAID-built footbridge as the only means of crossing a river for 18 villages. Before winter comes to this area and transportation becomes even more difficult, USAID plans to build another bridge that will allow light vehicles to travel across the river and reconnect trade in this remote area. *(Photo: Damaged vehicle bridge in Tavildara)*



USAID Creates Help Desk System For Customs. On August 8, Chargé d' Affaires, a.i., Sarah Penhune and the First Deputy Chairman of the Tajikistan Customs Service Mr. Nemat Rahmatov participated in a ceremony to officially launch the use of a new help desk software package for Tajikistan's automated customs system. The software was developed with assistance from USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project. The Help Desk system will improve the Customs Service's Unified Automated Information System by saving time and resources for traders and customs officials. *(Photo: First Deputy Chairman of the Tajikistan Customs Service Mr. Nemat Rahmatov (left) and USAID RTLC Project Chief of Party Tania d'Allonnes (right) signing official transfer equipment and software package for Tajikistan's automated customs system)*



USAID Supports Summer Camps through YTP Program. USAID's Youth Theater for Peace program (YTP) has sponsored youth-led training and peer engagement in Tajikistan through a series of summer camps led by former program participants. YTP uses an arts-based approach to engage youth and communities in identifying and finding solutions to local problems. USAID is supporting youth and adults trained earlier in the program to engage new beneficiaries by organizing their own camps through grants aimed at sustaining YTP activities in the target regions of Sughd and Khatlon. With grant support, two participant-led camps have trained more than 40 new youth beneficiaries in Uzbek- and Tajik-speaking communities in Djabbor Rasulov district of Sugd region. Another camp for 20 youth was held July 24-29 in Isfara

district. The organizers are youth and adults who were trained by YTP last summer and have applied the program's methodology to stage performances that spark discussion on local issues. *(Photo: Youth-led training and peer engagement through a series of summer camps in Tajikistan)*



USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project Training. In order to improve the capacity of research institutions and individual professional analysts, USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs (RTLC) project organized a three-day training for representatives of non-government organizations, education institutions, business associations, professionals and public officials. The training was conducted by trainers from the best research and analytical institutions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of the training was to provide participants the expertise necessary for research related to WTO and trade facilitation. The participants improved their knowledge and understanding of requirements related to research specification, planning, monitoring and evaluating, as well as their drafting skills and the manner of presentation. *(Photo: Ice-breaking session on improving the capacity of research institutions in Tajikistan)*



USAID Provides Equipment in Support of Tajikistan's WTO Accession. The USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs project also provided equipment for Tajikistan's World Trade Organization (WTO) Notification Center and WTO Enquiry Points, which were established by Tajikistan's Government in their endeavor to meet WTO requirements in the WTO accession process. The role of the Notification Center is to notify the WTO of any developments related to technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The purpose of enquiry points is to provide necessary information on standards, technical regulations, testing and certification requirements and sanitary and phytosanitary measures to WTO members and interested parties. USAID RTLC has provided computer hardware and office furniture for both enquiry points and the center. Establishment of the enquiry points and the center was a joint effort

of MEDT, USAID RTLC and the International Trade Center, Geneva. *(Photo: Jahongir Mamatkulov (left), of the Regional Trade Liberalization Project, transfers equipment to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's Notification Center supported by USAID/RTLC)*

Turkmenistan



High-level Government Officials Hear out Promotion of ICT for Education and Vow Cooperation. A delegation of visitors headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of the Ministers, Gurbanmyrat Mezilov, stopped at the USAID booth for a demonstration of information communication technology (ICT) applications for education from USAID's Promotion of ICT project. With ministerial representatives and rectors of various Turkmen universities and institutions in tow, three groups learned about the first-ever Turkmen-language programs for student electronic records and e-catalogs for university libraries, which have been requested as a part of the President's push for e-government into education. More than 3,000 visitors of mostly higher education institutions attended the international exhibition and scientific conference, "Science, Engineering, and Innovative Technologies in the Epoch of Great Revival," that took place at the Exhibition Palace in Ashgabat. USAID's booth highlighted projects promoting science and technology, and also included the Quality Learning Program as a part of its presentation.

(Photo: Mr. Rashid Meredov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs/Deputy Chairman of Cabinet of the Ministers speaks with Ms. Erin McKee, Mission Director for USAID Central Asia)

The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project Extends Activities to Turkmenistan. In June 2011, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) joined with the USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project to extend prevention activities to Turkmenistan. The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project is a five-year program aimed at reducing the spread of HIV and tuberculosis (TB) in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan through improving health behaviors among most-at-risk populations. The project will be implemented in Ashgabat and in Dashoguz city through the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan. Prevention activities will target people who inject drugs with key messages of reducing risky behaviors for HIV transmission, improved health seeking behavior such as TB testing and drug treatment, and improved treatment adherence.



World No Tobacco Day. In honor of World No Tobacco Day, the USAID Youth Centers project, supported by Chevron Nebitgaz, in collaboration with the Information Center of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, held a comedy event for the general public. More than 100 young people participated. Musicians and amateur actors performed comic skits based on healthy lifestyle themes: a life filled with joy, and a future without tobacco and bad habits. Event attendees received information materials about healthy lifestyles, including t-shirts and caps, with "no smoking" symbols. Live dialogues, quiz questions, competitions and a poster exhibition were also part of the event. One of the event's lasting images was of actors breaking cigarettes, rumpling cigarette packs and throwing them in the garbage. *(Photo: Information event devoted to World No Tobacco Day)*



USAID Supports Fight Against TB. USAID supports the National Institute of Tuberculosis and its technical working group through two programs in Uzbekistan: Dialogue on HIV and Tuberculosis and the Quality Health Care Project. In partnership with the technical working group, the projects developed educational materials on tuberculosis (TB), multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and dual infection with TB and human immunodeficiency virus (TB/HIV). Over the course of two meetings, May 17 and August 5, technical working group partners developed the criteria for appropriate materials on TB, MDR-TB and TB/HIV for three different target audiences – medical professionals, at-risk groups and the general population. The technical working group participants developed a poster for the general population and two different leaflets for youth and migrants. *(Photo: Technical Working Group meeting; photo credit: Umid Asamidinov, Project HOPE)*



Third Annual Peach Contest. USAID held the third annual peach contest in July in Quvasoy City, Ferghana. Variety contests promote farmer interaction, stimulate interest in agronomic best practices, identify new local varieties and disseminate agricultural information. Farmers share interests and experiences, spot common concerns, and identify solutions to their problems. They also have an opportunity to interact with and express their interests with local government representatives and the agricultural research community. Variety contests are held in specific geographic locales based upon their specialization and reputation for that particular fruit. USAID sponsors five contests throughout the harvest season including cherries, apricots, peaches, grapes and apples. Quvasoy City is renowned for its peaches with more than half of the 6,000 hectares of orchards devoted to the fruit. American varieties such as Elberta and Champion are among the prized peaches. Farmers have become quite entrepreneurial in their approach to the contests with successful participants promoting their varieties and identifying demand for cuttings which they offer to other participants at a price. The surprise of the 2011 contest was the appearance of a white flesh variety of peach, originally from Japan, which drew a lot of comments and attention. *(Photo: Peach variety contest-2011 in "Muyan Sohibkorlari" agrifirm, Quvasoy city, Ferghana Province)*

For more information about USAID in Central Asia go to:

Website: <http://centralasia.usaid.gov>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/USAID.Central.Asian.Republics>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/USAIDCentralAsianRep>

Foreign Assistance Dashboard: <http://www.foreignassistance.gov>

99-Minute Diagnosis: Will New Technology Turn Tide on TB War?: http://www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_jun11/FL_jun11_GENE.html

Afghan Women Pursue Studies across the Border: http://www.usaid.gov/stories/tajikistan/s_tj_education_across_border.html

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